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BIZARRE

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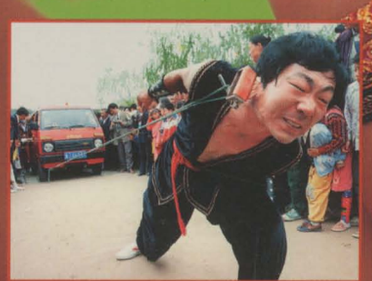

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BIZARRE

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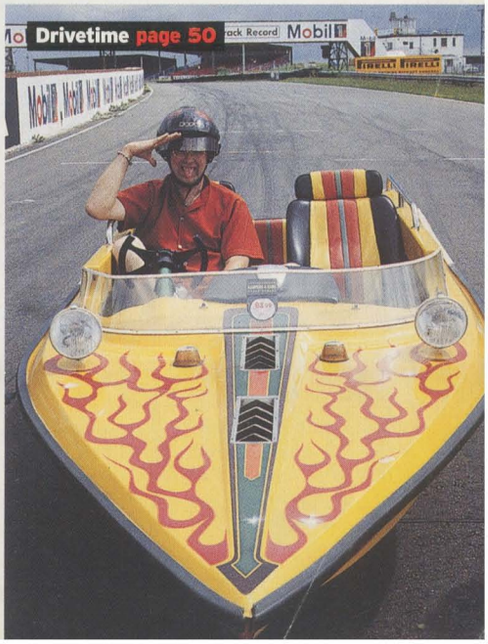

THE BIZARRE QUESTION

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE INDIAN?

FIONA JEROME (editor): Methi lamb
MICHAEL BOOTH (art director): Little Plum
JAMES WALLIS (managing editor): Ghandi's revenge
MARK BLACKLOCK (associate editor): Bhindi bhaji
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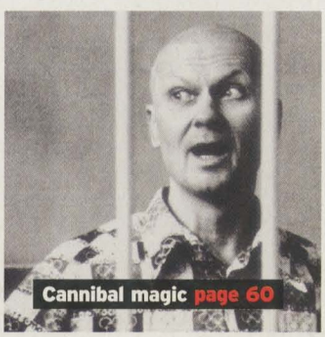
KATHY POOLE (editorial assistant): Prawn korma



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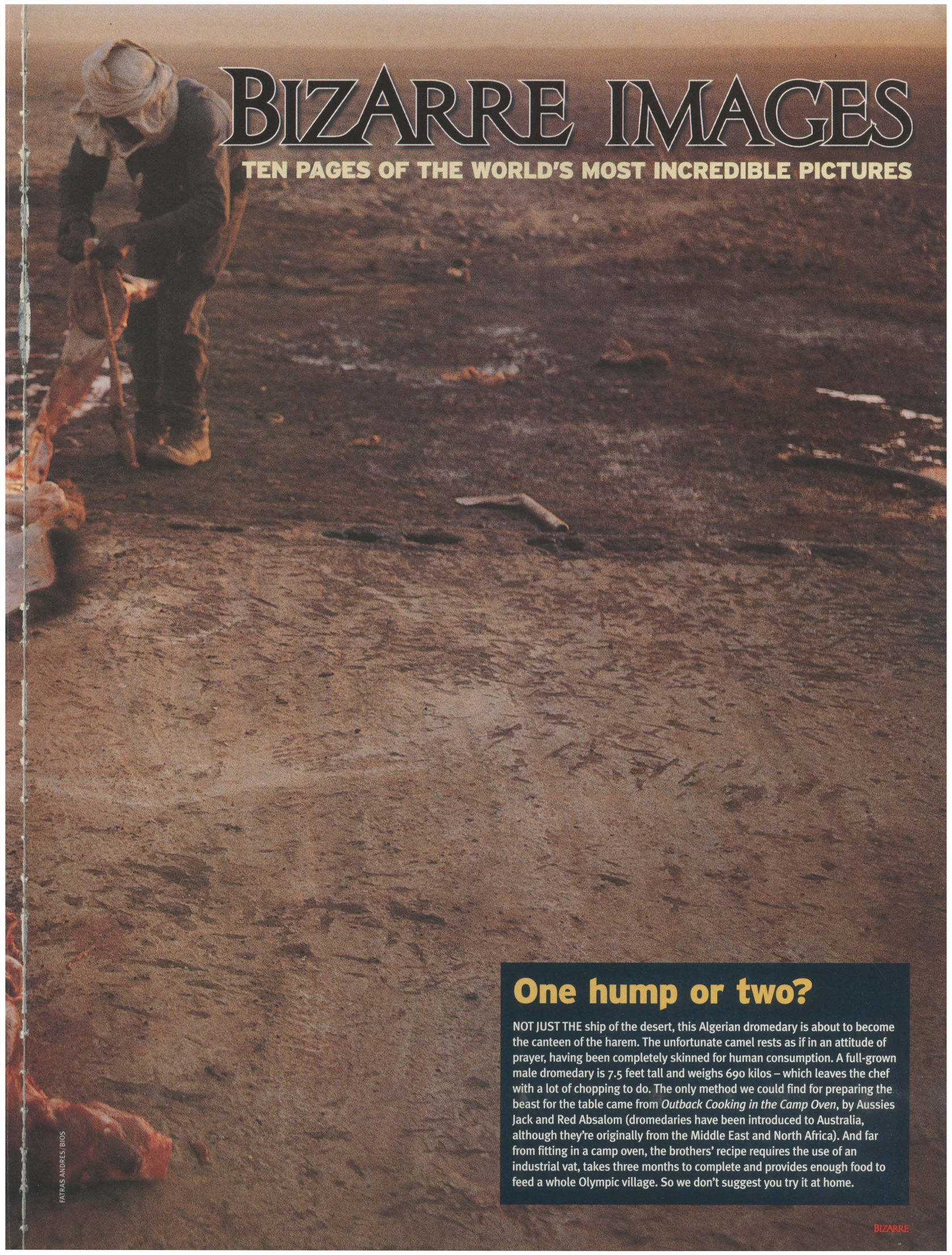
BIZARRE IMAGES

TEN PAGES OF THE WORLD'S MOST INCREDIBLE PICTURES



FATRAS ANDRES/BIOS

One hump or two?

NOT JUST THE ship of the desert, this Algerian dromedary is about to become the canteen of the harem. The unfortunate camel rests as if in an attitude of prayer, having been completely skinned for human consumption. A full-grown male dromedary is 7.5 feet tall and weighs 690 kilos – which leaves the chef with a lot of chopping to do. The only method we could find for preparing the beast for the table came from *Outback Cooking in the Camp Oven*, by Aussies Jack and Red Absalom (dromedaries have been introduced to Australia, although they're originally from the Middle East and North Africa). And far from fitting in a camp oven, the brothers' recipe requires the use of an industrial vat, takes three months to complete and provides enough food to feed a whole Olympic village. So we don't suggest you try it at home.

Cliffhanger

HE MIGHT BE having plenty of fresh air and fun, but Todd Skinner won't want to get up on the wrong side of bed on this particular morning. Staking his claim to being the ultimate 'outdoors type', Todd has chosen to kip precariously, dangling hundreds of metres up the north face of El Capitan, the mountain in California's Yosemite National Park more famous as a favourite site for base-jumpers. We have to commend his *laissez-faire* attitude towards personal safety. But most of all we like the fact that he can't be arsed to climb up the whole damn thing before taking to his sleeping bag. We just hope he realises where he is when he wakes up.

ADVENTURE PHOTO AND FILM

Fur-real

THE MAN WITH the well-combed face is Fajardo Aceves Jesus Manuel from Mexico, here seen arriving in the Taiwanese capital of Taipei on 21 April this year. The 24-year-old Jesus Manuel suffers from hypertrichosis, a hereditary disease that causes an over-abundance of hair, and blames his inherited condition on his great-grandmother's genes. However, the self-proclaimed 'wolfman' insists that his distinctively hairy visage does not cause him any untoward problems. Apart from occasional visits by worried dog-catchers, that is.

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

Ear we go, ear we go...

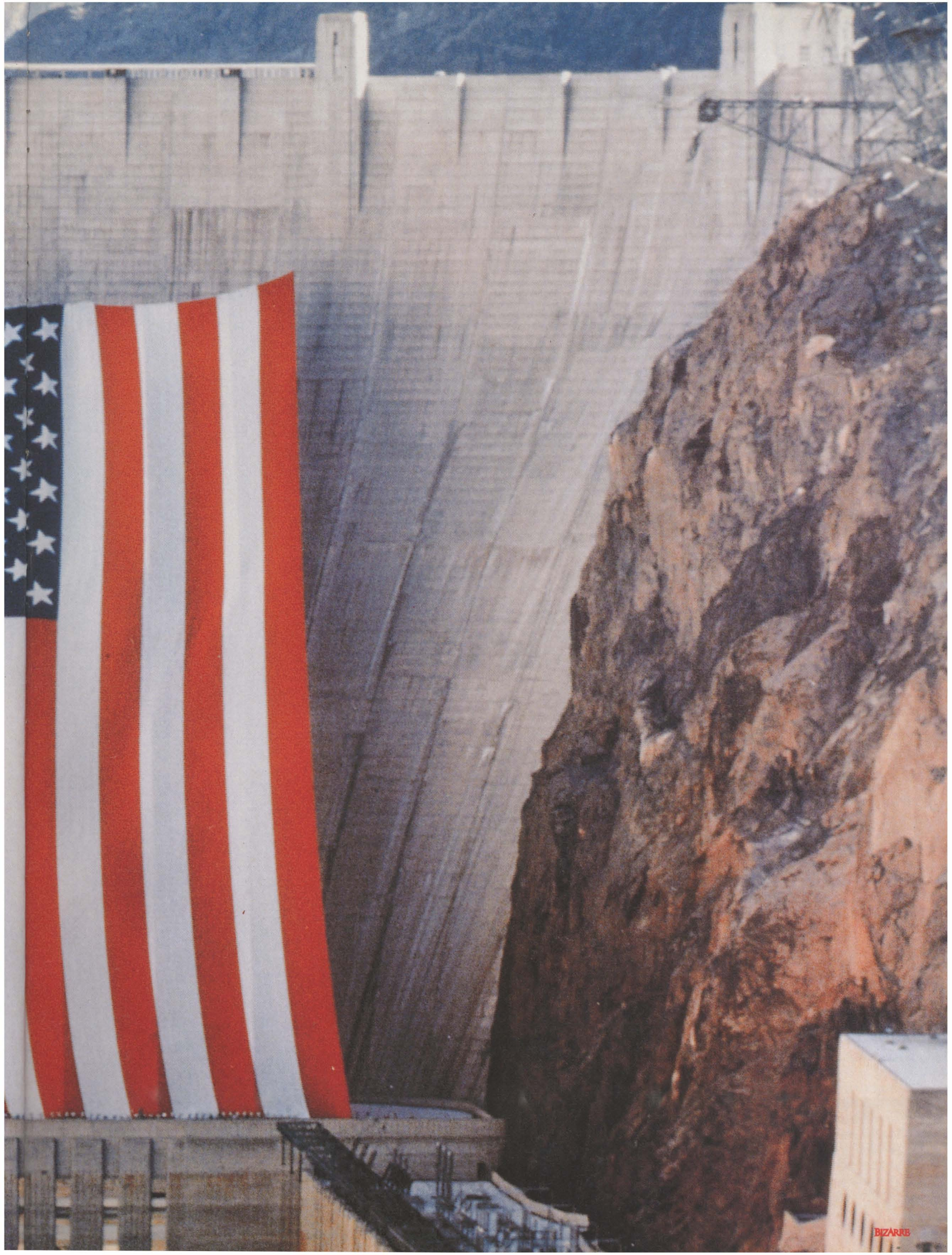
CHINESE STRONGMAN Li Jianhua proves he can lug anything by pulling a van loaded with eight children using the strength of his right ear alone. During this demonstration of his prowess, in the town of Wu Qiao in China's north-eastern Hebei province on 9 May this year, Li shifted his heavy load with a rope clipped to his lobe. And he didn't suffer so much as a cauliflower ear afterwards. The source of his Herculean powers is an ancient martial art called *qigong*, which allows him to concentrate all his energies in certain parts of his body. Having impressed his local legion of fans, Jianhua now aims to travel abroad to show off his skills and challenge other, more conventional strongmen in competition. *The Guinness Book of Records* has no section for the world's toughest ear, although records have been set by people lifting and pulling things with their teeth: Belgian Walter Arfeuille lifted weights totalling 281.5kg six inches off the ground with his, while Armenian Robert Galstyan's gnashers pulled two railway wagons, together weighing 219,175kg, a total of seven metres.

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

Dam big flag

MILLIONAIRE THOMAS 'SKI' DEMSKI will go to any length to prove to the world what a patriot he is. Which is why he's gone into the record books as displaying the world's largest flag. At a cost of US$50,000, his 505-ft long, 225-ft wide Old Glory took 500 people to unfurl at an official ceremony last year, where it was subtly hung over the Hoover Dam, on the Arizona-Nevada border. Former coal miner Demski has displayed huge flags before; when US hostages were released from Iran in 1981 and at the 1984 Superbowl. He was also moved to have his country's colours tattoed on his chest when he noticed the scar from his heart bypass operation resembled a flagpole. "Now I'm really carrying the flag for my country!" he quipped.

AP/PRESS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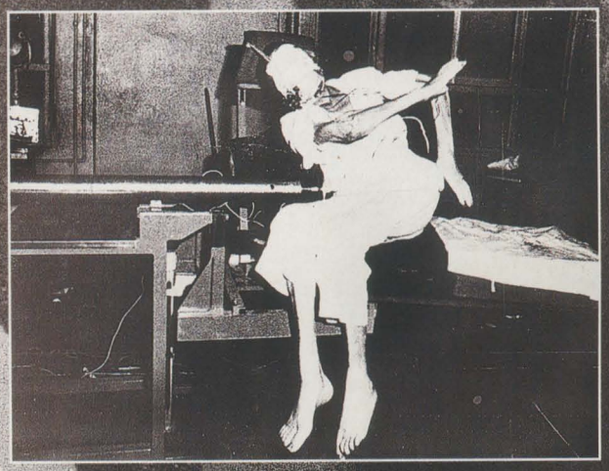


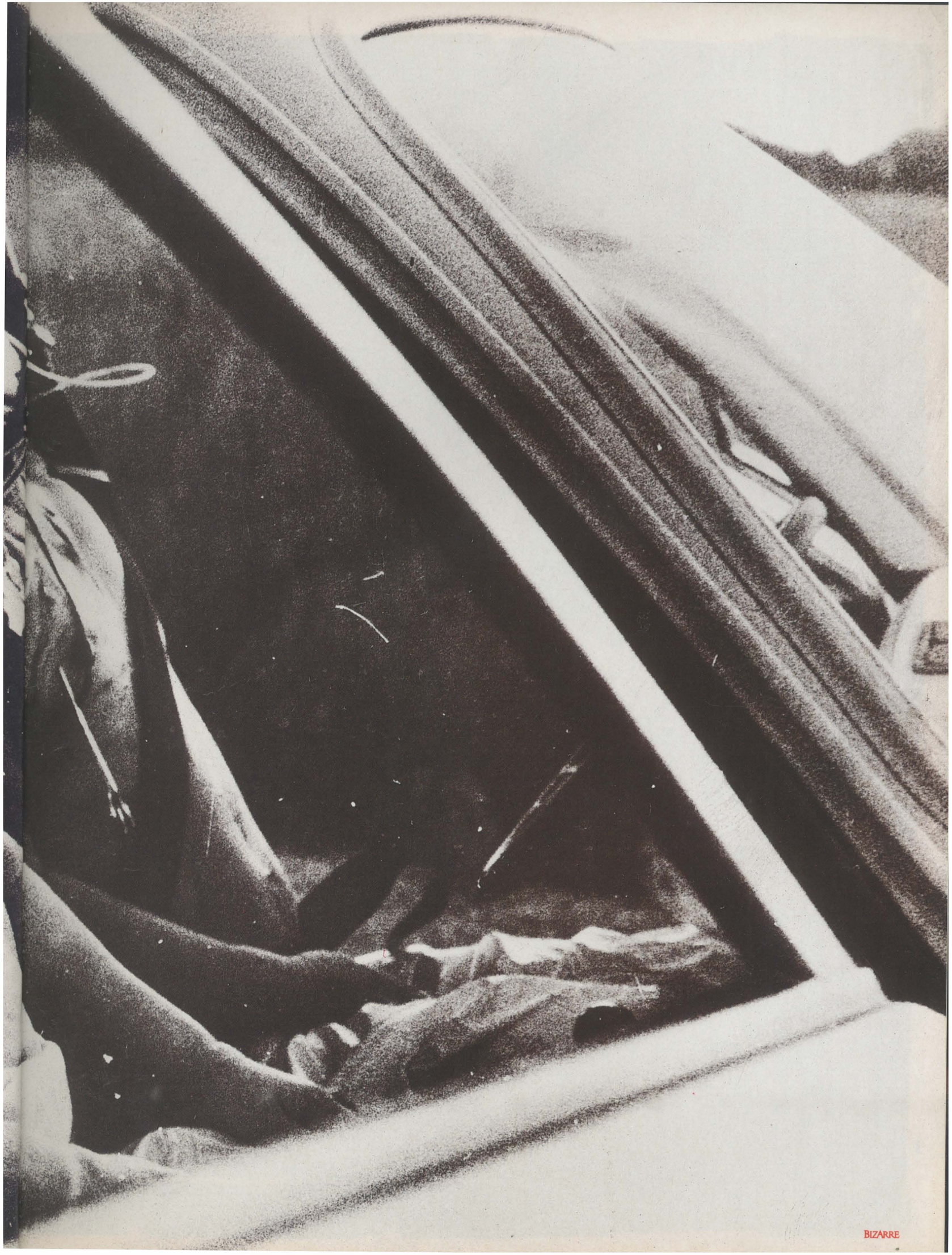
Fatal impaction

WHY SETTLE FOR dummies when you can use the real thing? Car-testers at ONSER, the French national road safety agency, in Bron, France, are getting a real feel for the injuries that vehicle accidents cause by using actual corpses in place of the usual articulated plastic bodies.

"Our investigation is dealing with the reconstruction of accidents, types of injuries, car victims, safety railing and security precautions in the car itself, such as safety belts," says spokesman Anton Chapon. "The bodies are crashed so we can study injuries like bone fractures and brain damage."

Some may think his methods are a bit sick, but Anton is quick to point out that every corpse used to be someone who had donated their body to science. He also claims that using real bodies is more productive than using models. "Speaking as a scientist, the best thing would be to experiment with living human beings. This would save a lot of work."

LOBO PRESS



FULL CIRCLE CLOTHING
slightly twisted

BIZARRE STORIES

Bin liners

GARBAGE PAIL KIDS

IT MAKES YOU wonder if the Italians are too vain to wear glasses, when you're walking down a busy street in Rome or Turin and are suddenly confronted by a poster on the waste bin reading: 'I'm a baby! Take me to a hospital or a safe shelter.' In case that doesn't alert you to the fact that the cylindrical metal container is not a crib-in-waiting, there's a big pic of a baby's head to accompany the slogan.

The posters are a response to a growing trend among guilty Catholic girls trying to conceal pre-marital pregnancies. In early July, a Filipina nurse faced murder charges for wrapping her newborn baby in plastic bags and chucking it down the rubbish chute of the block of flats. She is just one of an estimated 300 young mothers who will dump their offspring this year.

The 20,000 posters aim to make distraught young mothers think twice. The organisation responsible for putting them up have also looked to the medieval period for inspiration, and installed a 'wheel of the innocents' at a dozen locations throughout Italy. These are a kind of letter box for unwanted babies where they can be safely and anonymously stashed, and are checked by health workers on a regular basis for deposits. And while such devices may seem a bit cold and calculated, consider this: over the last few years new-born babies, most of whom don't survive their abandonment, have been found in old washing machines, by the side of roads having been thrown from vehicles and, in one particularly hideous case, hidden in a bush with its tongue cut out so it would not alert anyone to its presence.

Killer on the loose

Pardon me?

"I KILLED KATE Rich, and at least a hundred more." When he was on trial Henry Lee Lucas, on whose life *Henry, Portrait of a Serial Killer* was based, had no qualms about admitting his guilt. He had already offed his mother and his 15-year-old girlfriend Becky Powell. Over the years his death count rose as high as 600 as police, keen to clear up unsolved cases, wined and dined him across the southern States while he identified more and more victims of his purported killing spree. Now he and the authorities seem less certain.

So uncertain that George Bush, not the ex-President but the current Governor of Texas, was moved to let the 61-year-old Lucas off the death sentence, which was due to be carried out on 23 June this year. Bush, who had in February refused to pardon double murderess Karla Faye Tucker, decided that Lucas's death sentence for the murder of an unidentified hitch-hiker known only as Orange Socks, was too iffy.

Law enforcement officers disagree. As Phil Ryan, the Texas Ranger who arrested him, put it: "If anyone deserves to die for something he didn't do, I've never met a better candidate than Henry."

Aged bikers

Choppers!

BLOWING AWAY THEIR tough guy image, a bunch of North Carolina bikers were doing a ton with grannies in tow in Albermarle a few weeks ago. Held as part of the Stanley Manor nursing home's 10th anniversary celebrations, the biker party saw senior citizens kitted out in leather jackets on the back of scooters. Katie Boyett.

Sleuths, untruths and uncouth youths

Odd job

Sherlock Holmes's secretary

Gug Kyriacou is a Media Relations Executive for Abbey National at 215-229 Baker Street, which means that he has to answer all the post addressed to Sherlock Holmes at 221B Baker Street

CHRIS WARDE-JONE, FRANK SPOONER PICTURES, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, ASSOCIATED PRESS

How much mail does Sherlock get?
He gets between 20 and 40 letters a week. The vast majority are from kids between 12 and 15, the majority from Japan and the United States. Sherlock's birthday is 6 January, and every year he gets around 30 birthday cards. And Valentine's cards and Christmas cards.

What form do the letters take?
A lot of them start off with "We've been reading your stories at school", so teachers probably suggest that their class write a letter to 221B Baker Street. But I've had letters where people have said "Help me find my cat" or "I lost my locket in the garden on Saturday and I need help finding it". Other people send in home-made mysteries for Sherlock Holmes to solve.

What's the weirdest correspondence you've had?
One guy – I think he must write to a lot of people – told us he was the second coming of Christ. But most of them seen sane.

Why do people write to a fictional character?
I have no idea! I think the address has so much to do with it. You never know most fictional characters' addresses, but Holmes's address was so prominent in the stories.

But these are people who are convinced that Holmes exists?
Oh yes. They instinctively write to Holmes. The people who believe he's alive want his help: "I lost my best friend" or "I used to be war-buddies with this guy and I've lost touch".

Did the idea of being Sherlock Holmes' secretary fill you with anticipation or dread?
I love doing it! It's good fun. We've done interviews for Japanese TV, Dutch TV – I've even seen myself on TV in Italy, dubbed badly. Sherlock Holmes is so incredibly popular around the world, it's a pleasure, it really is.

The people who believe he's alive want his help: "I lost my best friend"

whose skintight trousers, black bra and Harley tattoo went down well with the rowdy crowd carried off the title Bike Babe 1998 at the age of 93.

"One of these days we might be here," said Karen Gibson, watching her husband give residents rides in his Road King sidecar, "and we'd want somebody to do something like this for us." So much for 'Live fast, die young, leave a beautiful corpse'.

Office politics

Double identity

JAPAN'S RECENT economic slump has forced desperate measures from an increasingly desperate section of redundant, middle-aged businessmen. With little hope of securing new jobs, they are turning to *alibai-ya* – companies who make alibis for those with secrets.

Companies like Create Corporation will, for between 5,000-20,000 yen a month (£21-84), manufacture the kind of identity the jobless executive craves: business cards portraying them as managers in commercial districts of Tokyo; and a phone line answered by a 'secretary' who explains her boss is out on business.

Until now, the *alibai-ya* were mainly used by women in the sex trade. But in Japan, loss of job equals loss of identity – and now the bogus business is booming.

WORLD WIDE WEIRD

In goal, it's Delta Force

As its pre-match warm-up before the USA-Iran showdown in the World Cup, American TV channel ABC interviewed several US citizens who had been held hostage in Iran in the late 1970s. Iran won 2-0.

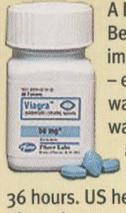
Bees in the belfry

Trying to get rid of a nest of bees which was obstructing building work, parishioners of the Pentecostal Assembly church in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, sprayed the nest with flammable chemicals and set light to it. The resulting blaze caused over $1m of damage to the church.

A grave situation

Due to budget cuts in the eastern Ukraine, some elderly people have not received their pensions for over five months. Officials have started offering them free coffins instead.

Up all night

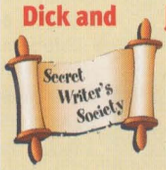


A Dutch tourist visiting Benidorm took the anti-impotence drug Viagra – even though he wasn't impotent – and was taken to hospital after his erection didn't go down for 36 hours. US health officials say Viagra has now killed at least 30.

Wash and blow-away

When Antoine Reed, a homeless New Yorker, slopped soapy water over Police Officer Michael Meyer's windscreen at a traffic junction in the Bronx, Meyer pulled his gun and shot Reed in the chest. He's been charged with attempted murder.

Dick and Jane



Panasonic Interactive Media has withdrawn copies of its educational computer game 'Secret Writer's Society', aimed at 7-9-year-olds, after reports of a bug which made the program recite a long list of obscenities out loud.

Weird sports central

Games without frontiers

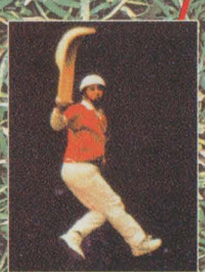
Korfball
Holland
It's mixed-sex netball, essentially, but played with a wicker basket instead of a net and with four men and four women to a team. Korfball, the only major sport which allows lads and lasses to get hot and sweaty together, is also popular in Armenia, Taiwan and UK universities – where its appeal seems to be based largely on its reputation as a pick-up joint on legs.

Rough-terrain unicycling
Seward, Alaska
George Peck, the world's leading exponent of Muni (mountain unicycling), hones his skills daily in the uncompromising terrain around his home town. Having learned to power his unicycle across boulder fields, tackle snowdrifts and hop over logs up to two feet in diameter, Peck reckons he can now reach speeds of up to 6mph on downhill stretches.

Mountain golf
USA
Would you go all the way to the States just to play one hole of golf? You might if it was the single hole of the annual Pike's Peak Classic, which requires players to tee off from the top of a mountain, aiming for a green at the bottom, 6,000 ft below. Par for the course is 24 strokes.

Octopush UK (pictured above)
If you've ever tried water polo and been left gasping for air, you'll want to give Octopush a miss. It's a form of underwater hockey, invented in the 1950s to keep scuba divers fit in winter. That means no air tanks and no regulator valves – just a snorkel. Imagine being stuck at the bottom of a 15ft pool with 11 divers writhing around you and your lungs bursting, and you'll understand why octopush is destined to remain a minority sport.

Bog-snorkelling
North Wales
Likely to appeal only to seasoned masochists, bog-snorkelling has been likened to swimming blind in a lake of treacle. Contestants have to swim two lengths of a 60m bog underwater, using flippers and mask. Holding this year's world championships up a mountain in Wales is merely a refinement of the sport's intrinsic cruelty.



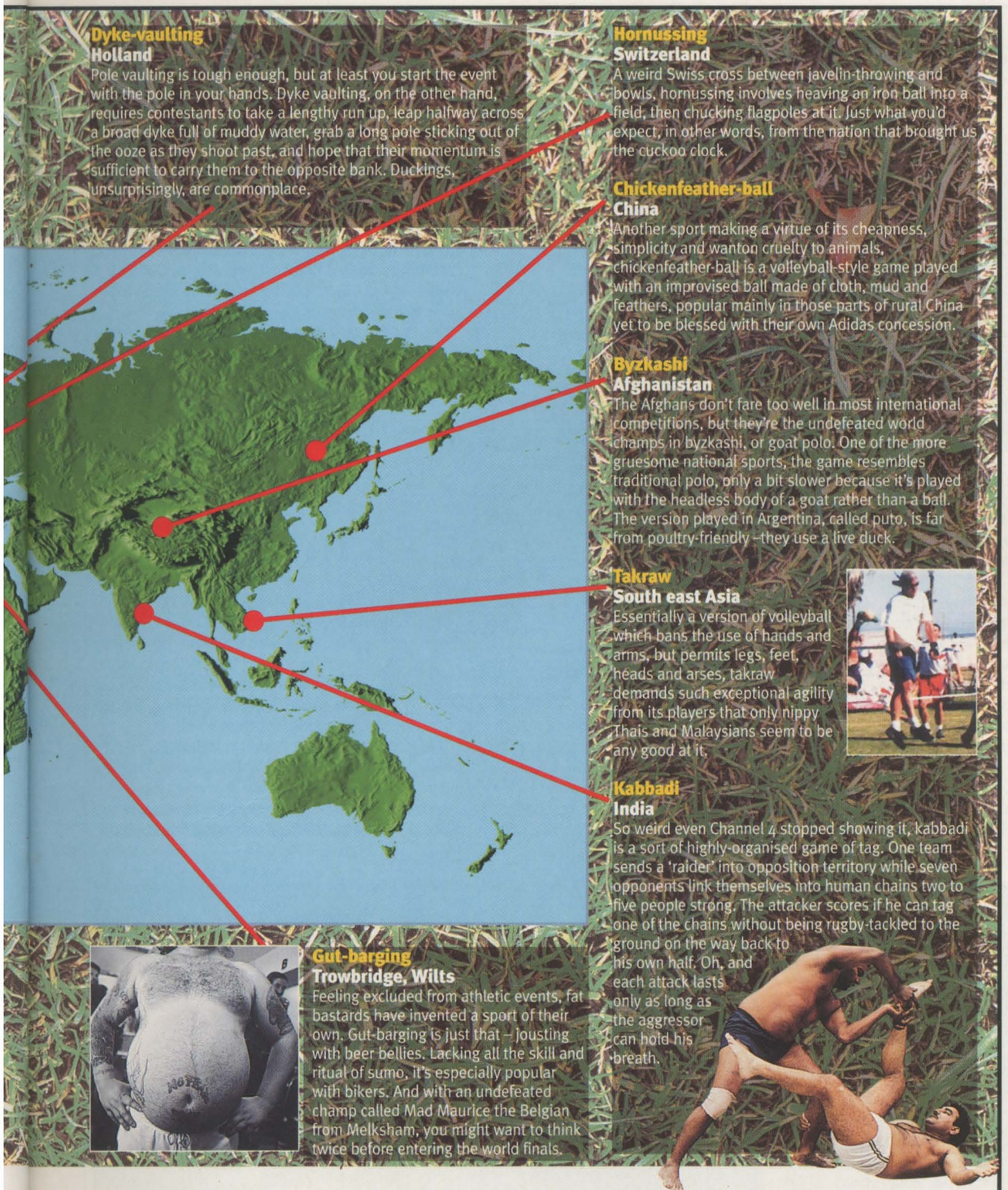
Pelota
The Basque country
The world's fastest game, pelota is played by two blokes with a rubber ball and wicker scoops. At ball-speeds of 125mph, pelota's a skillful if dangerous sport, but the complex rules – there are six sorts of basket, seven types of ball and four varieties of court – limits its chances of matching football for popularity.

The juice is loose

The Devil's brew

ATTENTION ALL university societies, bike gangs and Masonic lodges. Looking for something a little more testing for prospective members than making them eat a plate of maggots or drink vomit? Then get out to your local Turkish deli and snap up a crate of Acili Super Turnip, *the* foulest thing any of us here at the BIZARRE office have ever smelt, let alone drunk. It may support the stomach and liver, aid digestion and calm down nerves, as claimed on the bottle, but we don't care. We'd rather die young than ever look a glass of this ruby-red shit in the eye again.

NICK JOHNSTON, ALLSPORT, MAGNUM



Dyke-vaulting
Holland

Pole vaulting is tough enough, but at least you start the event with the pole in your hands. Dyke vaulting, on the other hand, requires contestants to take a lengthy run up, leap halfway across a broad dyke full of muddy water, grab a long pole sticking out of the ooze as they shoot past, and hope that their momentum is sufficient to carry them to the opposite bank. Duckings, unsurprisingly, are commonplace.

Hornussing
Switzerland

A weird Swiss cross between javelin-throwing and bowls, hornussing involves heaving an iron ball into a field, then chucking flagpoles at it. Just what you'd expect, in other words, from the nation that brought us the cuckoo clock.

Chickenfeather-ball
China

Another sport making a virtue of its cheapness, simplicity and wanton cruelty to animals, chickenfeather-ball is a volleyball-style game played with an improvised ball made of cloth, mud and feathers, popular mainly in those parts of rural China yet to be blessed with their own Adidas concession.

Byzkashi
Afghanistan

The Afghans don't fare too well in most international competitions, but they're the undefeated world champs in byzkashi, or goat polo. One of the more gruesome national sports, the game resembles traditional polo, only a bit slower because it's played with the headless body of a goat rather than a ball. The version played in Argentina, called puto, is far from poultry-friendly – they use a live duck.

Takraw
South east Asia

Essentially a version of volleyball which bans the use of hands and arms, but permits legs, feet, heads and arses, takraw demands such exceptional agility from its players that only nippy Thais and Malaysians seem to be any good at it.

Kabbadi
India

So weird even Channel 4 stopped showing it, kabbadi is a sort of highly-organised game of tag. One team sends a 'raider' into opposition territory while seven opponents link themselves into human chains two to five people strong. The attacker scores if he can tag one of the chains without being rugby-tackled to the ground on the way back to his own half. Oh, and each attack lasts only as long as the aggressor can hold his breath.

Gut-barging
Trowbridge, Wilts

Feeling excluded from athletic events, fat bastards have invented a sport of their own. Gut-barging is just that – jousting with beer bellies. Lacking all the skill and ritual of sumo, it's especially popular with bikers. And with an undefeated champ called Mad Maurice the Belgian from Melksham, you might want to think twice before entering the world finals.

WORLD WIDE WEIRD

Next: underwear

South Padre Island, off the coast of Texas, has made it an offence to wear socks while on the island. It's already against the law to wear ties there.

Pig dog

A German Shepherd police dog named Storm has been retired from the force after refusing to bite any more suspects. Norfolk police discovered Storm's latent pacifism seven months after putting him through a £5,500 training course.

"BART!"

Called to a report of a burglary at the Bronx home of Carl Natanagara, son of a deceased nuclear worker, police were surprised to find samples of radioactive strontium-90, radium-226 and caesium-135, plus napalm, guns, gunpowder and heroin. Natanagara was arrested.

Now give her a brain

The US edition of Elle magazine has admitted that it used digital software to erase Cindy Crawford's belly-button from a recent picture they ran of her.

Crystal balls

Police have charged two men in Johannesburg with murder after finding them in possession of a bag of human testicles. Apparently the purloined bollocks are valuable to witch-doctors, who use them as *muti*, a traditional medicine.

Mouseketeers go bad

Wisconsin police claim that two local kids, aged 15 and 19, robbed a bank to fund a trip to Disney World and, when the cash ran out, robbed another one. They "had more brass than a Chinese gong factory," said Madison County State's Attorney William Haine.

Fire water

During the World Cup festivities, the sacred flame at the Arc de Triumphe was accidentally extinguished when a drunken Mexican reveller relieved himself all over it.

Little big men

The Half Monty

THEY'VE SWAPPED a life of panto for one of pants-down. Gee Williams, Ray Griffiths, Phil Holden, Chris Chapman and Dave Vear are calling themselves The Full Half Monty and intend to shamelessly cash in on Britain's most successful film and provide the bizarre housewife's choice at the same time. "We might be pint-sized but we've got a lotta bottle!" they claim, in immaculate tabloideze. The boys have a varied showbiz history, including stints as kissograms and fire-eaters, and if this little venture doesn't quite work out, they're sure to interest BIZARRE's favourite roving dwarf photographer, Miron Zownir.

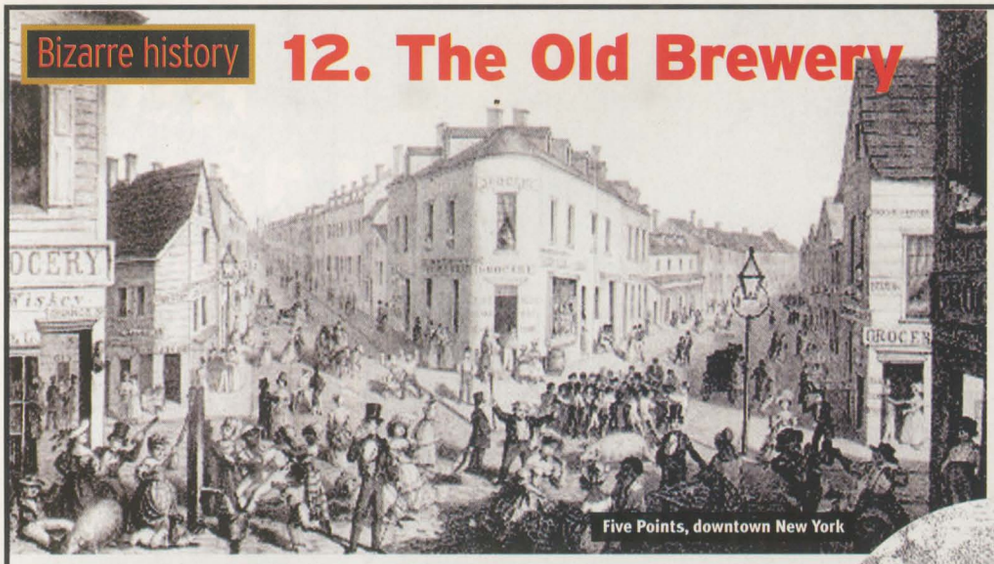
WAY TO GO
12. Death by snowball

FOR MOST CHILDREN, snowballing is fun. But not for the nine-year-old Swiss boy who decided to make his frozen weapon bigger by rolling it down a hill in April of this year. He slipped and fell under the giant snowball and was crushed to death.

BIZARRE STORIES

Bizarre history

12. The Old Brewery



Five Points, downtown New York

Murderous hell-hole at the rotten core of the Big Apple

DICKENS CALLED them rookeries – decaying inner-city tenement buildings, linked by a maze of dingy alleys, stuffed full of the worst scum the industrial revolution could produce.

Every major city had them, but none was more crowded, less sanitary or more lethal than the Five Points district in downtown New York, a stinking hollow at the junction of Baxter, Worth and Park Streets which formed a natural meeting point for local crooks, escaped slaves and the most brutal and desperate immigrants from the worst slums of Europe.

By the middle of the 19th century, the Five Points teemed with muggers, sneak-thieves and child prostitutes. Heavily-armed gangs patrolled the turf for stray well-heeled New Yorkers. The cops seldom investigated such crimes, however, as Five Points was so dangerous that police only dared enter it in squads of six.

Drunkenness and buggery

The dark heart of this slum was The Old Brewery, a five-storey, 18th-century brick building which had been converted in 1837 into the dankest tenement in the city. Up to 1,000 people were packed inside the Brewery, living up to 75 in a room in the worst conditions; the building had no light, no heating, no furniture and no sanitation. The inhabitants crapped in the corners and buried their dead under the floors.

Hell-hole: The Old Brewery

So far as the rest of New York was concerned, the only good thing about the building was that it directed much of its occupants' criminality inwards. Even the hardest hoodlums of the Five Points feared the scum of the Old Brewery, and the inhabitants were often stoned if they were spotted in the open.

With nowhere to go and no money, the stronger occupants preyed on their weaker neighbours. One girl was murdered for a penny and her body thrown into a corner, where it lay unburied for five days. It has been estimated that between 1837 and 1852 the murder rate in this one building ran at a killing a day – an estimated total of 5,000 deaths.

The deaths only stopped when the Old Brewery was purchased for $16,000 by the Ladies Home Missionary Society. On 2 December 1852, a huge force of police ejected the inhabitants into the street and the foul old building was razed to the ground.

Some of the most lurid stories told about the Old Brewery are exaggerations. It's hardly credible that many of those born inside its walls could have grown to adulthood without venturing outside – but many went days or weeks without tasting fresh air, if only because each time they left they risked losing their belongings and their floor space. And the police did sometimes enter the building, though never in squads less than 50-strong.

What certainly is true is that the Brewery was as awesome a hotbed of drunkenness, crime, buggery and incest as ever existed – and that when the demolition crew finished their work, they took away 100 sacks of human bones from under the floors.

Silly world records

Shelled out

MOST OF US couldn't open 100 oysters in half an hour (hell, many would struggle to open even one of the slimey, stubborn buggers). So to do that many behind your back seems incredible. But not to world record holder Marc Bardier. He recently shattered the above record by prising open 218 in 30 minutes, but not without slicing himself with the oyster knife a few times. Even if he couldn't see what he was doing, 218 is only a drop in the ocean compared to his other feat... opening 60,000 oysters in 10 days for Montreal's Fêtes Gourmandes festival.

Coffins to boot

Dead impressive

THE MISERABLE GITS among us look to the wealthy and mutter, "they can't take it with them." But in Accra, Ghana, they certainly can. In an attempt to upstage their neighbours even in death, locals are buried in these prestigious, albeit bizarre coffins. Work for a brewery? Then get buried in a beer bottle. Air hostess? How about a replica Ghana Airways plane. Keen fisherman? A giant crab is a must. Twelve master carpenters attend to every whim of the locals, building everything from oversized shoes to scaled-down colonial mansions. But why anyone would want to be buried in a giant chicken is beyond us. We just feel sorry for the pallbearers.

THE FICE POINTS WEBSITE, FRANK SPOONER, IAN WEARSFIE,LDFRACHETTI

TOP TEN

Viking warrior names

The real names of Norway's infamous rapists and pillagers. Valhalla, we are coming

1 Thorarin Bag-Nose
But don't say it to his face

2 Einar Buttered-Bread
He's a big man, but he's out of shape

3 Oddi Glumsson the Little
The depressed demon dwarf

4 Ragnar Hairy-britches
Well what do you expect? They were made out of yak hide

5 Magnus Barelegs
Too hard to wear trousers

6 Havard the Fecund
One for the ladies

7 Thorfinn Skull-Splitter
Don't call his pint a poof

8 Arni Pin-Leg
Prosthetic violence a speciality

9 Olaf Tit-Bit
The tiny titan of terror

10 Thorir Tree-Beard
The ancestor of ZZ Top

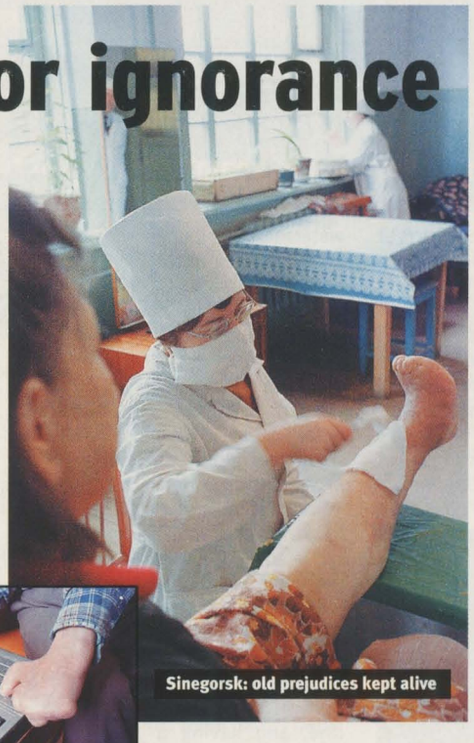
Russian leprosy lock-down

No cure for ignorance

IN MAY 1991, the 44th World Health Assembly took a resolution that it should eliminate leprosy as a public health problem by the year 2000. Since its emergence in the early 11th-century, leprosy has struck terror into humanity; it once affected every continent and left in its wake horrifying images of mutilation and exclusion from society. *Mycobacterium leprae*, the bacterium that causes the disease, was discovered by G.A. Hansen in 1873; however, it wasn't until the late 1940s that any treatment appeared. Today, WHO-approved Multi Drug Treatments can cure leprosy with little in the way of side-effects in the space of six months. But the medieval spectre of persecution and isolation still hangs heavy in the backwoods of Russia.

Near Krasnodar, in the northern Caucasus, is a colony of 100 lepers. The barracks are surrounded by forest, the inmates kept away from their families. The oldest patient recently died at the age of 96, having spent 80 years of her life there. Yet, thanks to the efforts of the colony's directors, few people know of this place's existence.

The Sinegorsk colony is run by Boris Semenenko, who outlines his strategies as: "No contact with the outside. The patient is taken away to be cured but few are told what they are suffering from. We examine the leper's relatives to detect early signs of contagion. It's all done discreetly to avoid hysteria among the neighbours. They are just told that he or she moved to another town. That way there is no fuss."


Sinegorsk: old prejudices kept alive

It can take 20 years to get out

The patients at Sinegorsk have the same MDTs available to them as the rest of the world, and most of those shuttered into the community have already been cured. But under a 1923 Russian law, anyone diagnosed with leprosy is considered 'sociably dangerous' and forcibly interned. Five to seven years go by before they are formally recognised as being no longer contagious, and even then no one can leave the colony without an official permit. It can take up to 20 years, by which time many will not have a home to return to. This is in contrast to the worst-afflicted areas of the world – South-East Asia, Africa and South America – where lepers are no longer isolated.

Nigel Slater, Leprosy Mission's director of fund-raising, described the Russian treatment of sufferers as "Unbelievable. It keeps alive the old prejudice that lepers are cursed by God. I know of no other country whose health organisations behave in this way."

His concerns are condemned by Sinegorsk's head doctor, Girori Beron: "I am shocked to hear that British charities do not isolate lepers – that is why the disease is still growing worldwide."

WORLD WIDE WEIRD

AC/DC

Exodus, a Seattle-based right-wing Christian group, has recently put full-page ads in American newspapers saying homosexuality can be cured with prayer. However, the phone number they printed actually belonged to a confused electrical contractor in Alabama.

Beer and shots

Larry Slusher, 47, was drinking with his lifelong friend Silas Caldwell in a parking lot in Arjay, Kentucky, when he put a beercan on his head and challenged Caldwell to shoot it off. Never a good idea. He died later in hospital, and Caldwell has been charged with murder.

Readybrek is interested

The American Institute of Food Technologies has demonstrated food additives it has created from the glow-in-the-dark cells of shrimps and jellyfish, which could be used to make luminous food. Expect it in a couple of years.

What kind of congress?

Last year, porn mag *Hustler* offered complimentary subscriptions to US Congressmen. Of the 535 members of Congress, only 16 actually turned the offer down.

The root of all evil

A Mennonite bishop has complained to Argentinian police that a $50,000 bribe he intended to use to influence the local government was intercepted by local con-men, who not only didn't pass it on, but altered the IOU note to read as $250,000.

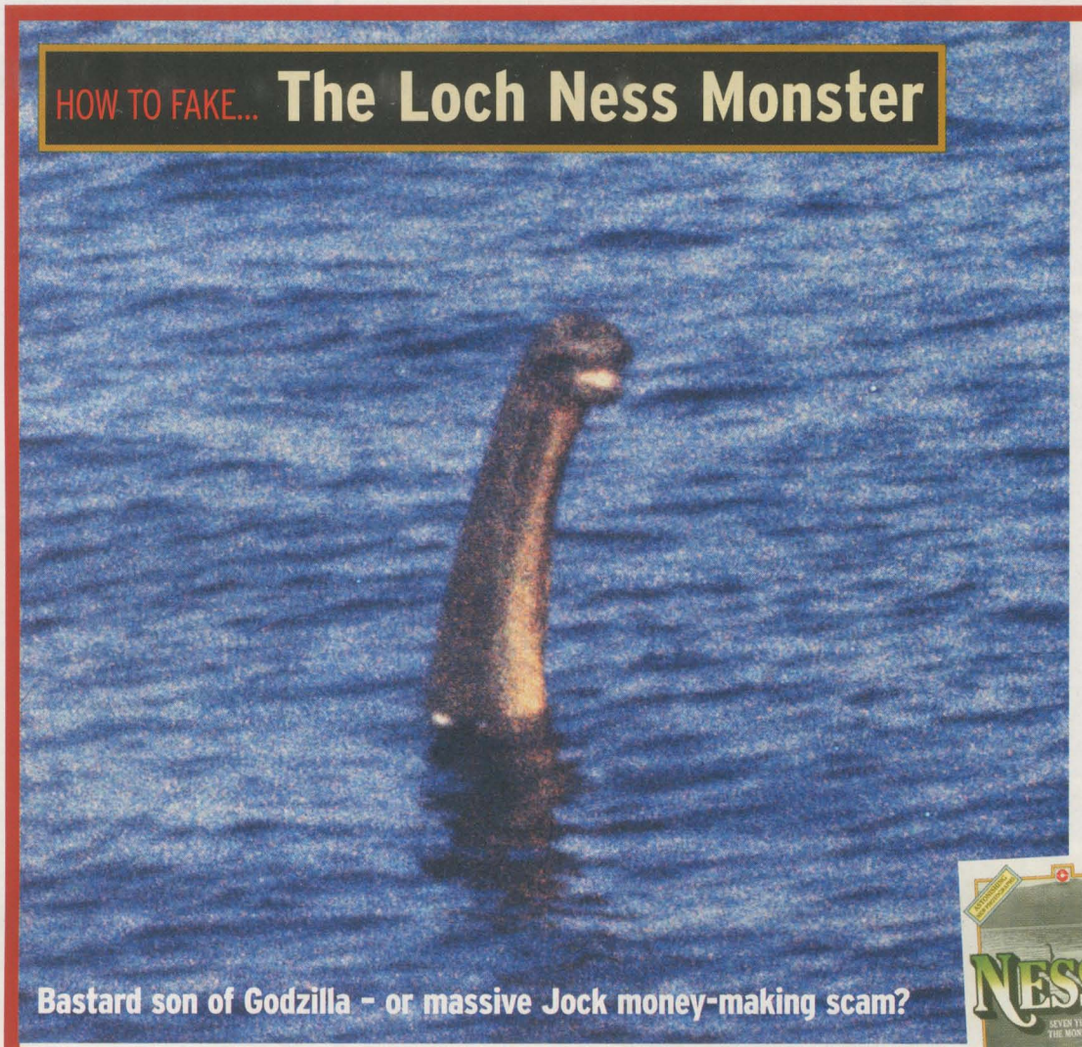
The handbrake of God?

After bribing local authorities with the equivalent of £120, Argentinian blind man Julio Cesar Perez was granted a full driver's license.

Spam bam

After a digital argument in a chat-room on the AOL on-line service turned nasty, seven men were arrested for going round to the home of an eighth in New Jersey and beating him up with a baseball bat.

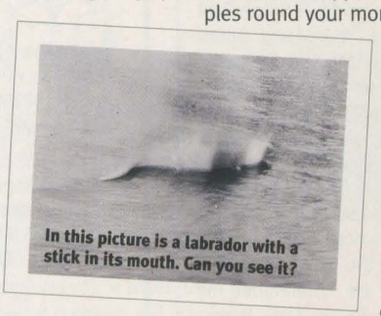
HOW TO FAKE... The Loch Ness Monster



Bastard son of Godzilla – or massive Jock money-making scam?

WHETHER OR NOT you believe in the Loch Ness Monster, fame and fortune await anyone who can produce a convincing picture of the mystical beast. The famous 'Surgeon's photograph' of a head and neck emerging from the water is recognised by almost everyone, and has been the basis for several scientific debates on the monster's size, shape, species and speed. And, like most pictures of Nessie, it's a fake.

Nessie dates back to 565AD, when Saint Columba saw a monster in the loch and ordered it to stop eating people. But the story really took off in 1930, when a sighting by three fishermen brought it to the media's attention, turning it into an industry now valued at over £20 million a year.

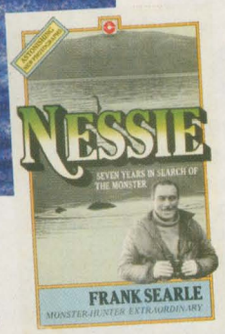


In this picture is a labrador with a stick in its mouth. Can you see it?

So how do you create a believable picture of Nessie? Firstly, prepare a cover story. You will, unfortunately, have to go to Loch Ness, if only so that people can remember seeing you there. Do not despair: there is at least one decent pub in Drumnadrochit, the village with the daft name half-way down the loch's 24 miles.

The problem with Loch Ness is that it's a tourist trap, and there are people everywhere. If you report a sighting, and 20 Americans stand up and say they were there and didn't see anything, you're sunk. Find a remote location – the south bank is less busy than the north one. Then go there when there's nobody else around and fake away.

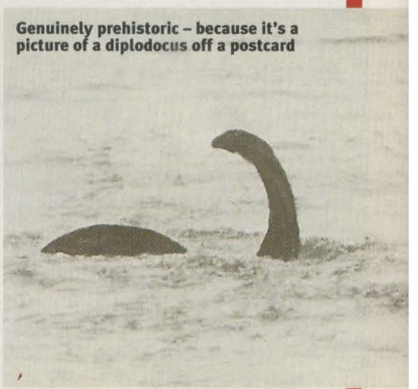
Eager cryptozoologists will scrutinise your picture, so details like the weather, the opposite bank and ripples round your monster have to be right – but not that right: Frank Searle, who hunted the monster from the late 1960s up to the middle 1980s, took several Nessie pictures, most of which can be dismissed as ludicrous – but many people believed them. His techniques ranged from finding a post in the water, dressing it up to look like a monster-neck and throwing a stone at it to make ripples, to cutting out a dinosaur from a postcard and sticking it on a picture of the loch. This was enough to convince Coronet Books to publish his it's-all-real opus *Nessie: Seven Years In Search of the Monster*.



More complex was the hoax by 'Duke' Weatherall, a 1930s film maker and big-game hunter. Having been the victim of a monster hoax while working for the *Daily Mail*, he had his revenge in 1934 by building a monster-neck on a toy submarine, and having a gynaecologist friend photograph it. This 'Surgeon's photo' is the most famous Nessie pic and was believed for 60 years, until one of the men involved made a death-bed confession. The secret of its success: the cropped version that everyone saw didn't give any idea of scale. In the full print, which shows the far shore of the loch, it's clear the monster's 'neck' is less than a foot high.

The monster's 'neck' is less than a foot high

Genuinely prehistoric – because it's a picture of a diplodocus off a postcard



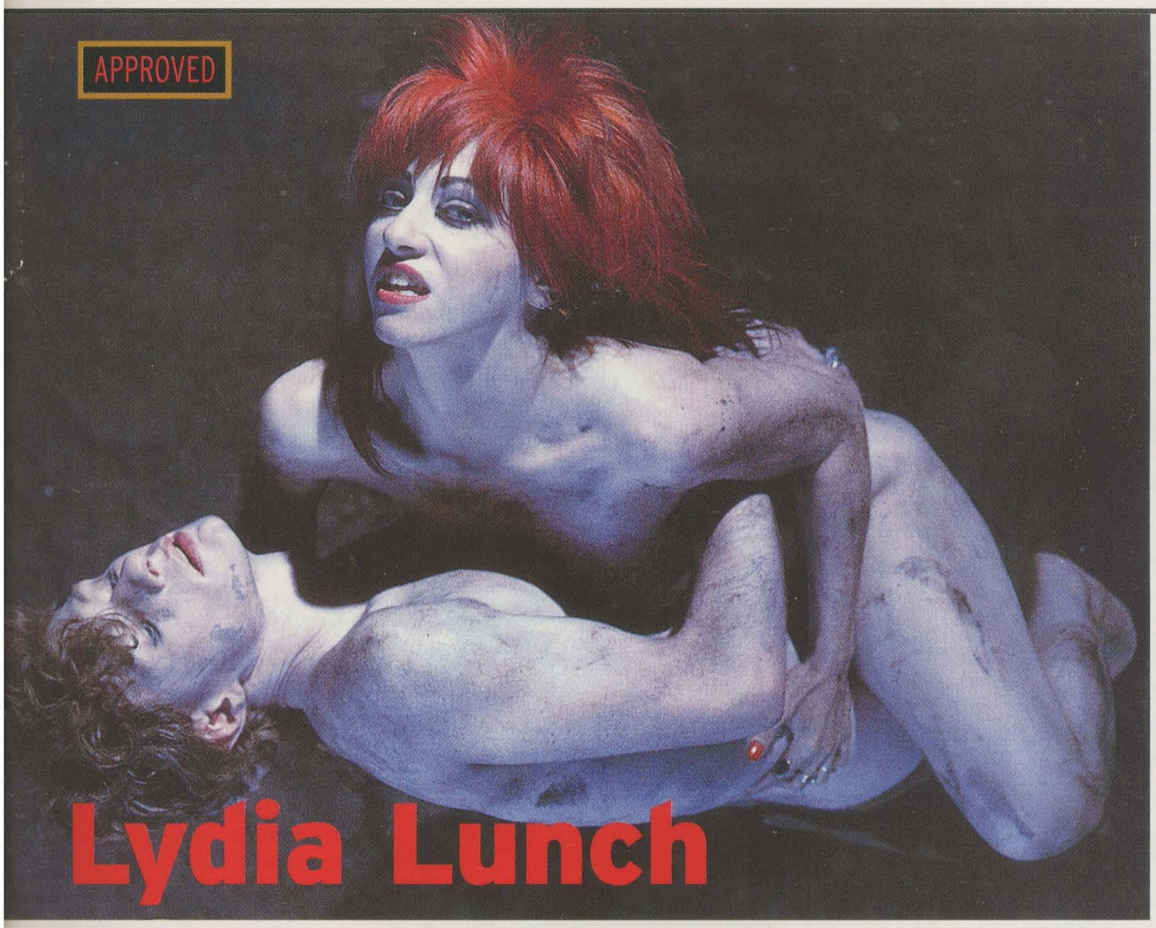
If models, cut-outs or computer manipulation don't hold much appeal, you can always use natural phenomena. Loch Ness is so wide that the wake of a big boat won't reach the shore for many minutes, and if you photograph that from near the water-level, it can look like humps moving along the loch.

Make sure that your photo's a little bit fuzzy. You're an enthusiastic amateur, remember, not some hardened professional. A crystal-sharp pic will let the sceptics find the details which will prove your photo's a fake. So shake that camera a bit, and use the wrong sort of film. Black-and-white pictures are also easier to fake than colour ones, but hardly anyone except arty ponces uses black-and-white film these days, so be careful.

Or if you get a decent science budget, you can cheat all you want. The loch's so murky that underwater photos are dodgy in the extreme. Back in 1972, Dr Robert Rines's underwater cameras in Urquhart Bay snapped something he believed was the monster's head. Fifteen years later, Operation Deepscan dredged up a rotting tree stump from the loch's bottom – with an uncanny resemblance to Rines's 'head' pic. So snap any old rubbish, get it 'computer enhanced', and then subtly substitute a retouched version that has a flipper shape added.

The key thing to remember is that most people want to believe in the Loch Ness Monster, so they'll want to believe that your picture is the real thing. Frank Searle's postcard cut-outs went undetected for years because people gave him the benefit of the doubt. So don't let the guilt get to you: find a photo-agency that'll syndicate your pic world-wide then jet off to the Bahamas, where you can lie back and think of Scotland.

FORTEAN PICTURE LIBRARY



Lydia Lunch

She's spent the last 20 years documenting every form of human depravity – and committing a fair bit herself. And she's always sided "with the bad guys"

LYDIA LUNCH WAS "conceived on a Saturday night in the back seat of a run-down Chevy. He was drunk, she was in tears. They tied the knot six weeks later. My father's daughter." At 16, having spent adolescence "trying to erase the greasy memory of my father's hands", she boarded a bus for New York and stepped into madness, mayhem and infamy.

Possessed of infinite cunning and charm coupled with a ferocious intelligence which enabled her to talk her way into anything, Lydia made ends meet hustling prescription drugs she'd scammed from a crooked doctor in midtown Manhattan. One of her first customers, 'Ill Will', took her back to his flophouse room to party. They hung out for a few days, shooting pool, shooting the shit and banging on speed. He liked her because she didn't ask too many questions. She liked him because she didn't care to know. The next time she saw him, he was on the front of the *New York Post*, under the headline 'CANNIBAL CAUGHT!'

"New York City did not corrupt me," she writes in the recently published *Paradoxia: A Predator's Diary* (Creation). "I was already corrupted. By the age of six, my sexual horizon was over-stimulated by a father who had no control over his fantasies, natural tendencies or criminal urges. Before my teenage years I had already experimented with mescaline, THC, pot, acid, quaaludes, tunials, valium and angel dust. I was already an experienced pickpocket, shoplifter, short-shrift hustler. New York was a giant candy store, meat market, insane asylum, performance stage."

> "I was already corrupted by the age of six"

From this devil's playground, Ms Lunch forged the most remarkable of careers. Sick of small-time thievery, she turned to music at precisely the time New Wave had turned to No Wave, and with her band of fellow misfit luminaries Teenage Jesus And The Jerks "elevated Manipulation into Art". Her philosophy: get in front of an audience of paying Johns, but instead of selling them pleasure, sell them pain. "Detail every form of madness, hysteria, torture, obsession," she declared.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, Lydia reamed her way through the sonic underground; associating with like-minded deviants such as James White (in Teenage Jesus and a star turn on his *Off White* LP), Jim 'Foetus' Thirlwell (the collaborative *Stinkfist* LP is a highlight), and The Birthday Party (*The Agony Is The Ecstasy/Drunk On The Pope's Blood*; *Honeymoon In Red*), with whose angular guitarist and master of psycho-slide action Rowland S. Howard she forged an enduring relationship, melting down blues with bad ju-ju on the sublime *Shotgun Wedding* LP. Her 1980 *Queen Of Siam* album took subversive 1960s pop (Classic IV's 'Spooky') and smoky late-nite jazz ('Knives In My Drain') and forged *the* personification of female cool. Lydia is the fallen Goddess that Courtney Love was obviously so desperate to be.

Brimming with restless creative energy, she also found time to script and star in Richard Kern's two best bad-ass movies, *Fingered* and *The Right Side Of My Brain*, which were largely autobiographical celluloid nightmares. Two more bands, 8 Eyed Spy and 13:13, both left their brand on NY's subculture before, turning her attentions away from music and focusing on the spoken word, she set up her own Widowspeak label in 1987, in order to record her own diatribes and those of likeminds such as Henry Rollins and Hubert Selby Jr. In 1988, she formed a hardcore trio called Harry Crews, after Florida's finest literary son, together with Sonic Youth's Kim Gordon. They recorded one LP, *Naked In Garden Hills*, the title of one of Crews' books. Said Harry of Lydia: "She seemed like good people. Albeit a trifle horny."

In the 1990s, Lydia no longer haunts the Bad Apple ("Try keeping your sanity there. I dare you.") but resides in Kansas, from where she has released two volumes of essential reading, *Incriminating Evidence* (Last Gasp, 1992) and the aforementioned *Paradoxia*. The former is a collection of essays, rants, short plays and scripts which stare down every form of madness and degradation and dare them to fuck with her.

"I think my speeches are hilarious," she notes without irony. "I think I'm a natural comedian, but I like denying people the chance to laugh. I want to deny you the relief of the punchline."

Paradoxia is a dairy of her psycho-sexual stalkings, which opens with the immortal lines: "No names have been changed to protect the innocent. They're all fucking guilty." It is the most enthralling, focussed and unselfpitying autobiography you will ever read. It is also immensely entertaining: "Most of the men I have lived with have attempted suicide at least once," she writes. "I was always disappointed that none of them actually succeeded."

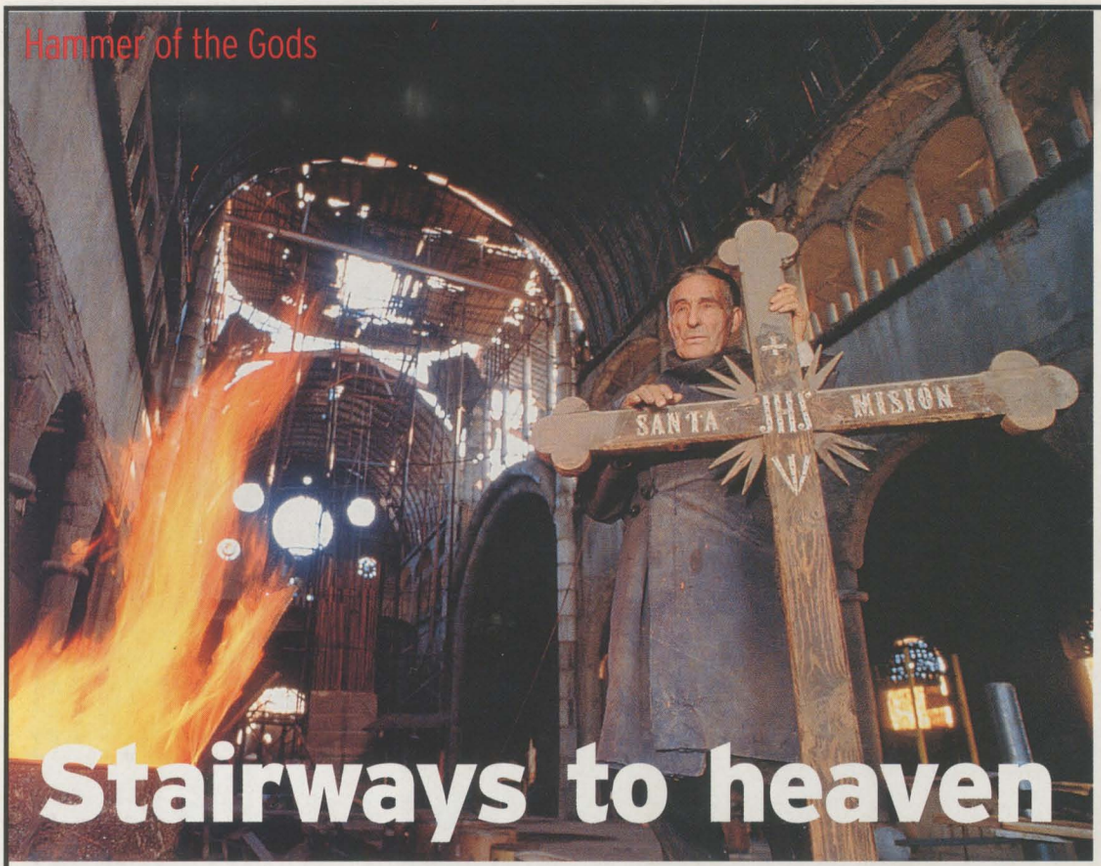
Queen of confrontation, torched song singer, mistress of the spoken word, practitioner of Pussy Power.

Lydia Lunch – Approved!

The voice of treason: Lydia elevates madness into art

REDFEARNS

Hammer of the Gods



Stairways to heaven

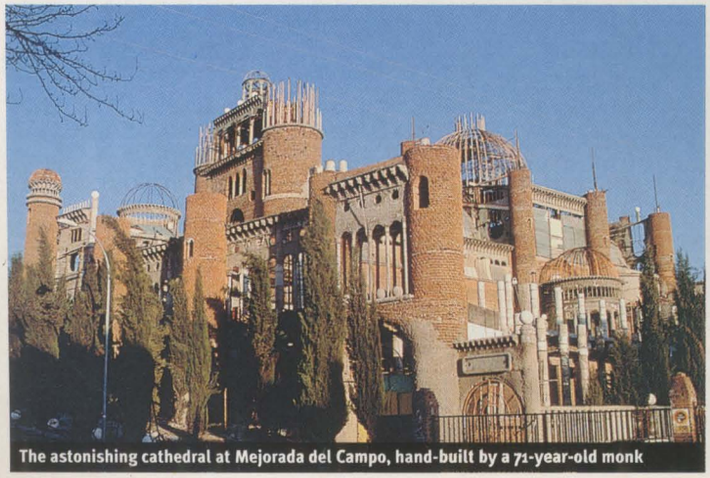
With his bare hands, a pensioner from Spain has created a monument to God. And he's just following a Latino tradition of back-breaking worship

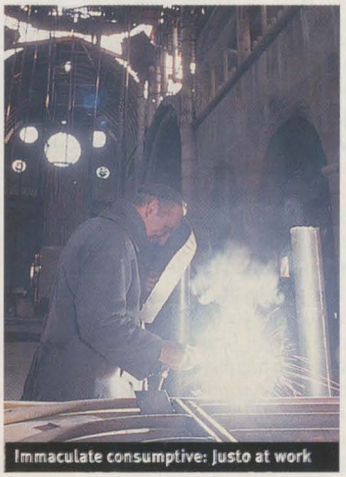
TALK ABOUT A labour of love! Sprightly 71-year-old Justo Gallego is still hard at work trying to finish the cathedral at Mejorada del Campo, 18 miles east of Madrid. What's unusual about the Nuestra-Senora-del-Pilar church is that the 50 metre-long house of God, with its 30 metre-high roof, has been built by Justo single-handedly. Despite the fact he had no architectural or building knowledge when he first started, Justo has built a monument to his own faith after tuberculosis forced him to give up a solitary life as a Cistercian monk.

So, at the age of 38, he returned to the small plot of land he'd inherited from his father and got out his plumb-line. He drew no plans and happily admits he didn't know what he was doing and that the locals thought he was crazy. "For 33 years in snow, rain or wind, from seven in the morning until dark, Monday to Saturday, I've worked," he recalls. "I've done it all... mixed the cement, built the walls, climbed the scaffolding." He is now a hero to his neighbours, who donate materials and money.

Currently he's working at putting on the cupola, 30 metres above the ground, without bothering very much about safety precautions: "Danger is everything, but so is God!" he chortles. Justo is sure he'll live long enough to complete this mammoth task and hear a mass in his own private cathedral.

House of the holy: inside Justo's church


The astonishing cathedral at Mejorada del Campo, hand-built by a 71-year-old monk


Immaculate consumptive: Justo at work

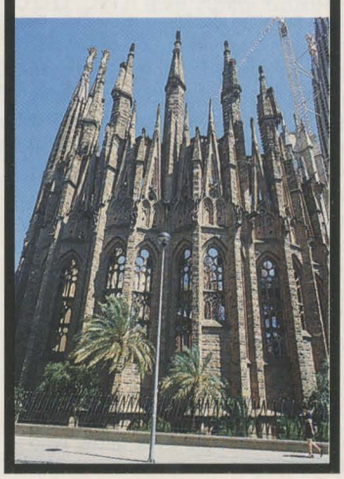
The maddest cathedral in the world, ever?

Maybe not, but it's certainly the longest running. Started 114 years ago, it's still not finished

THE SAGRADA FAMILIA was begun in 1884 and remains incomplete to this day. Designed by Spain's most famous architect, the Art Nouveau-influenced Antoni Gaudi, it's a riot of decoration. Sadly, only one of its four spiralling, honeycombed towers (St Barnabas's) was completed before poor old Gaudi was run over by a tram in 1926.

Following the methods used by medieval builders, the towers were constructed without scaffolding, the workers building them up like a spiral staircase as they went. There were supposed to be 18 towers in all (everything in the cathedral is symbolic, based on a complex cosmology) – one each for the 12 apostles, the four evangelists, the Virgin Mary and Christ himself. Christ's tower was going to be 170 metres high. Gaudi, who believed "Colour in architecture must be intense, logical and fertile", planned to cover each tower in Venetian glass mosaics, crowned by Episcopalian symbols and the cross.

Gaudi wanted to build five naves, based on a medieval design. What we actually think of as the cathedral was only one wing of it, designed to represent the Passion, and it took until the mid-1970s to complete (the Spanish Civil War got in the way, but since the 1950s work has progressed steadily). At this rate the Sagrada Familia won't be the cathedral for the 21st century, it's likely to be still 'under construction' in the 25th.



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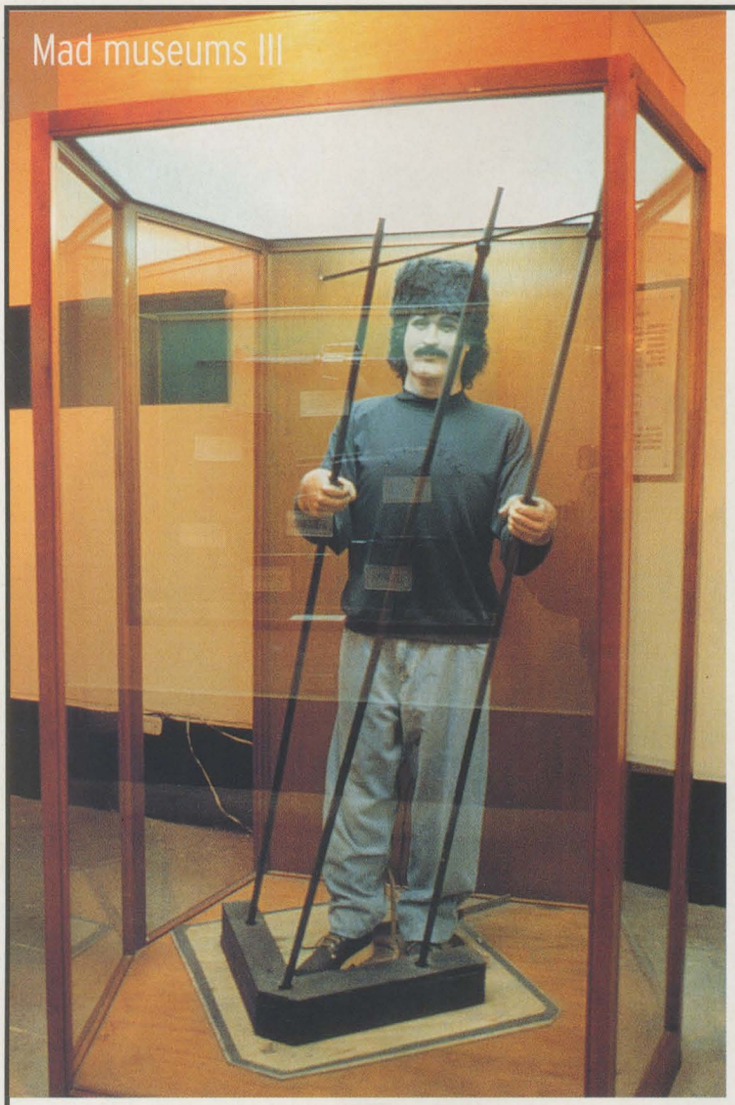
Mad museums III



Cocaine culture

The high life and violent death of drug king Pablo Escobar are celebrated at Columbia's ace museum

SEE PABLO ESCOBAR's anorak! Gasp in amazement as you witness the technologically advanced communications systems (okay, an old-fashioned mobile phone) found in a warehouse where Escobar once hid and may have used in running one of the world's most powerful drug empires! Wonder why the waxwork of The Man™ in jail looks strangely like Terry off *Brookside*; curly wig, stupid tash and all.

Will we ever run out of stupid museums to send you, lucky readers, to visit? Not while the world is full of men and women of limited vision and even more limited funds who insist on opening trophy rooms dedicated to their particular obsession. In this case, the Pablo Escobar Museum was created shortly after the notorious Columbian drug lord's death on 2 December 1993 at the hands of Columbian police by... er... the Columbian police.

See photos of dead bodies

The head of the Medellin Cartel was famous for his fear of extradition to the US, stating: "Better a grave in Columbia than a jail cell in the United States." He even went so far as to pay terrorists to take over the Columbian Palace of Justice and hold their Supreme Court Judges hostage when there was a chance the country would change its extradition policy. In the end, government troops managed to take it back, but not until half of Columbia's top judiciary had been shot. It's amazing anyone was willing to consider the case anyway: prosecutors who moved against Escobar would usually get a visit from one of the Cartel's immaculately-dressed lawyers who would make them an offer, after showing them pics of their family going about their daily lives. Their choice? "Lead in the head or silver in the pocket."

As early as 1988 Escobar was worth an estimated three billion dollars, all of it profits from cocaine production. With over 40 bases in and and around Medellin he was notoriously hard to catch. His huge financial powers bought him into Columbia's governing body where he ruled from within. He routinely killed workers he hired to put escape tunnels and underground hiding places into his houses at an estimated rate of three deaths a day. Then there were the people who were gunned down in the street for looking at the walls of Escobar's homes funny.

In the end the government created a special hit squad of 600 men dedicated to hunting Escobar down. Even so, it took them five years to find him because he had so many paid informants within the police force, he usually knew about raids before the squad had finished planning them.

Despite his lavish lifestyle, the police didn't seem to be able to get their hands on many genuine Escobar mementoes, so had to make do with lots of articles similar to those the traffikers may have used, or dummies portraying not-terribly-convincing scenes from Escobar's life.

Among the rather shoddy collection of waxworks, wanted posters and photographs of dead bodies are some genuine oddities, like the three guns with solid gold handles belonging to Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, one of Escobar's fave hitmen. One of Pablo's lackeys, a terrorist known as El Arete, had a nice taste in Harley Davidsons, but that's not really a good reason to take a holiday in notoriously unstable Columbia. And gorehounds are not going to travel a long way to look at some grainy black-and-white photos of Escobar in his shroud, or the watch he was wearing when he was killed.

Still, not everyone down your local can claim to have seen the mighty Pablo Escobar's anorak.

Bang! Assassin Gacha's golden guns

Splat! Escobar as he appeared when dead

Vroom! El Arete's high-powered hog

Kerpow! More of Gacha's sizeable armoury

Calm down! Eh! It's me, Te' with one of me shellsuits. Oh Christ it isn't. It's Pablo Escobar

CARLOS ANGEL/FRANK SPOONER PICTURES

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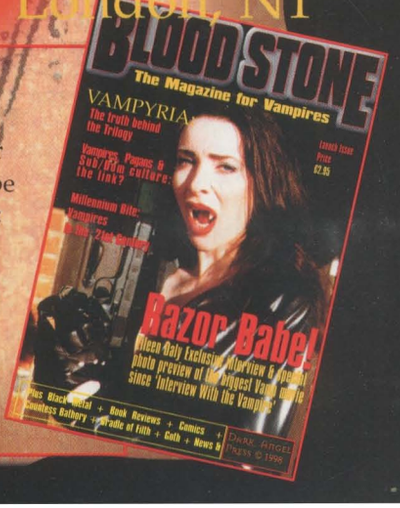
BLOOD STONE
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Get your motor running and head on down the highway, as MARK BLACKLOCK catches up with the rugged host of BBC2's *Top Gear* and author of *Hot 100 Cars that make you go PHWOAR!*, the inimitable king of the road...

Jeremy Clarkson

Do you prefer your writing or TV work?
Writing's still the best thing, the most fun. To sit down with a clean piece of paper for the *Sunday Times* or to write something like a video script, it's great.

Have you always been a motoring correspondent?
No, no. Christ, no. I started on local newspapers, the *Rotherham Advertiser* – births, deaths, marriages, funerals, flower shows.

So when did you start specialising in cars?
I needed to get to London and I thought the only way I could do that was to go freelance and write about cars. All the car magazines I was reading at the time, they weren't really telling me what I was interested in – you know, could you lift your shopping over the boot? I'm 19, I could lift a photocopier over the boot! I wanted to know "How fast does it go and how much does it cost?" I started writing about cars in the way that I was interested in them, not in the way that old people were, and it seemed to catch on. There's still people writing about them for old people, but I don't really like old people.

Have you ever wanted to write about anything else?
Boats, but I'm doing that now. *The Boat Programme* on BBC 2; it's *Top Gear* with boats. But no, not really. It's like saying to Barry Norman, "Hey Bazza, why don't you do a cookery programme?" And I still get a buzz out of driving cars. I'd give it up the day I got bored of it.

Have you no desire to try racing, say?
I did race once and I was terrified. It's hard enough to overtake on a road and that's someone who doesn't mind being overtaken. If you're in a race, you're trying to overtake someone who really, really doesn't want you to come past. The race was notable for two things: I set the slowest-ever fastest lap at Silverstone, and it transpired that my car was faster than the guy in front. I thought "Christ, if I keep my foot down I'm going to be alongside him when we reach the top of the home straight and then I'll have to overtake him." So I drove all the way down the home straight with my foot not quite down hard so the crowd woudn't know I wasn't trying my hardest and so the gap stayed the same, so I could follow him round the corner and not have to overtake. I mean, I was in third place, I was going to get on the podium and spray champagne in my first race and that'll do me. No unnecessary derring-do and bravado.

Do you have a clean driving licence?
I do, but then I'm in the very fortunate position that I get to go on racetracks every day and go completely nuts, so I don't feel the need to elsewhere. It's in all of us to go fast now and again, and it doesn't matter how many times Mr Prescott gets on his soap-box and tells us all to drive at 3mph, because it's human nature. But I get to do it on racetracks. That said, if I'm ever late...

If you were transport secretary what changes would you make?
Ahh, huge ones. All the buses would go, that's the first thing. I really do not understand buses trundling around and pumping out fumes so some old woman can get to the post office to buy another tin of cat food. You know, at the height of Communist Russia they built a special lane so the rich and famous could move around quickly. Amazingly, at the peak of democracy that we're living in we have a special lane for the poor and old to move around quickly. Then I'd build so many roads, which would make me popular with hay fever sufferers because there'd be no countryside – the whole country, all of it, tarmac. There'd be no hay fever, no traffic jams, you'd never be late for anything – fantastic.

How would you treat car criminals?
I understand these kids. Had I not had a fortunate upbringing, I would've been a car thief. Can you imagine how much fun it would be, were you not going to get punished, to race around Woolworth's in a stolen car, and if you're 14 years old and the worst you're going to get is a few hours community service? You weigh up the odds. I can't think of anything quite like handbrake-turning into a pile of beans. I can understand why they do it, but obviously if I came to power I'd have their legs chopped off with a circular saw and they might think twice.

Is there going to be another series of *Robot Wars*?
Well, there is, but I'm not doing it. It was very popular and I think it'll become a big, big programme.

What's your all-time top car?
Ferrari 355. That's by far and away the best car in the world. Amazingly, it's the only thing we all agree on on *Top Gear*. And it's the cheapest of the Ferraris, so it's not like just going for the most expensive. It's fantastic.

But you have a soft spot for Jaguars as well?
I use a Jag every day. All the way through the 1970s and most of the 1980s they were crap, but now that they're building brilliant cars I can't see why anybody, in Britain at least, buys BMWs or Mercs. And it's much more stylish and faster.

What sort of Jag do you drive?
It's the new V8, four litre, with a supercharger. It's stupidly fast. The great thing about Jags is that you can pull up outside the swishest hotel and they'll fall over themselves to help you, and then you go to Brixton and everyone thinks you're a drug dealer and you get the same amount of respect. Jags cover every part of the spectrum.

"I can't think of anything quite like handbreak-turning into a pile of beans"

Have you ever had a crash?
Well, yeah. I had one 36 hours after I passed my driving test. Everyone should be made to have an accident that quickly. It makes you think "This driving lark's a bit harder than I thought", which is good because otherwise you go around thinking you're invincible. I've crashed a few test cars. I was flown all the way to Japan by Daihatsu to test one of their new cars. I'd been in the car for 30 seconds before I tore the entire front end off. I went to apologise to the man who was running it and he said, "Don't worry, we make one every 23 seconds!"

What's the best country in the world to drive in?
Italy. Because the police encourage you to go faster. I'm not joking, I was driving through Sicily, in a Sierra Cosworth, and Ford had said it could do 150, so I was testing it out, pelting down this autostrada – 148, 149 – when I saw a carabinieri van. So I slammed on the brakes and slowed down to about 70 behind them and the door slid open and a uniformed arm stuck out and waved me to "Come on!"

What do you find bizarre?
That Bill Clinton hasn't had more affairs.

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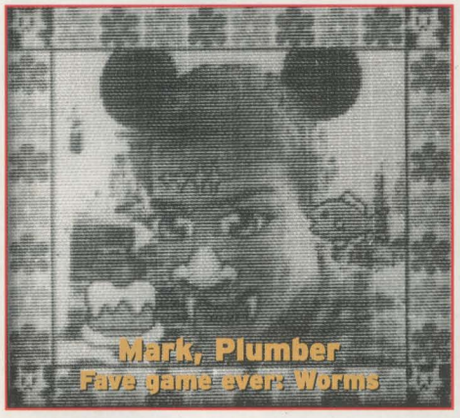
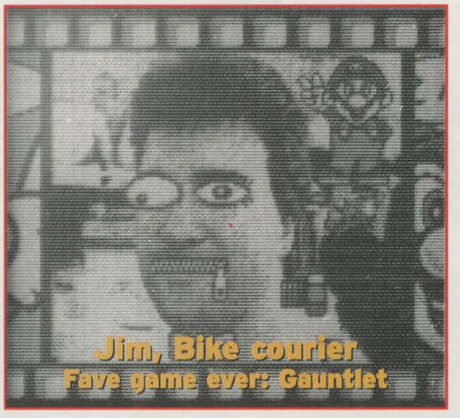
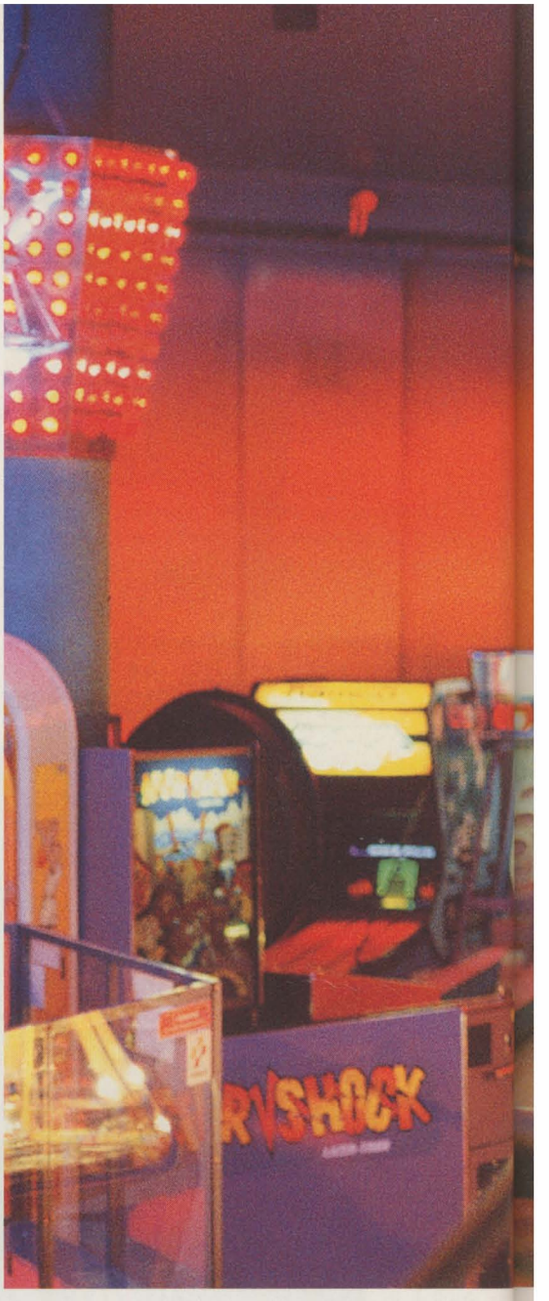
Bizarre Road Tests...







We want big screens, seats that shake, stereo sound, guns and fishing rods. Bizarre heads to the arcade for the latest extreme video thrills

TIME CRISIS 2 (Namco)

Do what? Save the world from a criminal organisation by shooting them all in a graphics-rich set of European locations. A pedal lets you duck and reload, and the very cool gun has a convincing recoil. The two-player option is exceptionally neat.
Pete: Total stress relief without having to curb crawl.
Louise: Cool as fuck – just like being Chow Yun Fat for the day.
Mark: Big guns, big bangs... and a pedal? Awesome, if confusing at first.
Jim: It feels more like an action movie than a video game, which adds to the fun.
Rating:

DOWNHILL BIKERS (Namco)

Do what? Hurtle down a twisty-turny mountain course at high speed, seated on a *faux* mountain bike. Pedal and steer it just like you're riding a real one. Well, almost.
Pete: Speaking as a cyclist, it made no sense at all.
Louise: Mountain biking with all the sweat, but none of the mountain – what's the point?
Mark: More fun than an exercise bike – just.
Jim: Not as challenging or as fun as Piccadilly Circus at rush-hour.
Rating:

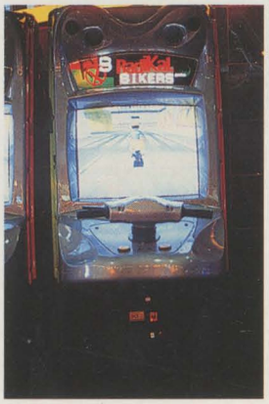
BASS FISHING (Sega)

Do what? Catch fish. The game has a fishing rod, and you choose your bait, cast your line and then have to land any fish that bite. The world's first fish-'em-up, it's apparently number one in Japan right now.
Pete: It's something different. The three-pointer that got away.
Louise: For those with a serious thrashing fish fetish only.
Mark: Fun for a while, but I won't be doing that again.
Jim: Kind of a chill-out video game, and almost completely unlike real fishing.
Rating:

HARLEY-DAVIDSON (Sega)

Do what? Hog action: sit on a plastic Harley and ride around LA trying to find checkpoints within a time limit. About the only game that makes you look half-way cool as you play.
Pete: Like the real thing, it needs a lot of practice.
Louise: If you had a lot of time, this could be really fun.
Mark: Needs more realistic accidents.
Jim: A bugger to control, and not enough going on to keep it interesting.
Rating:

RADIKAL BIKERS (Gaelco)



Do what? Drive a moped through three Italian cities, delivering pizza. Chase fat women! Run over dogs! Jump ramps! Smash the *Mona Lisa*! Collide with rhinos! Pizzas, Pisa, mad music, Italian driving and

ARCADE GAMES

Photography by Tara Fisher

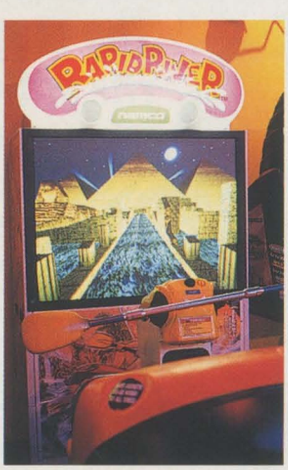
extra olives combine with big style.
Pete: About the most fun you can have in an arcade.
Louise: This game was even fun for the people watching it.
Mark: Rhino-tastic! Very playable indeed.
Jim: Insanely brilliant. At last a game with a genuine sense of humour.
Rating:

FINAL FURLONG (Namco)

Do what? Horse racing. Ride a plastic pony to power and steer your horse on screen: rock it fast to speed up. Sadists will enjoy using the whip. But our panel was less than impressed.
Pete: An exercise in making the player look ridiculous.
Louise: Or letting gamers stare at girls' arses.
Mark: Er, is this a sex thing?
Jim: It's a great idea for the would-be Frankie Dettori, but it simply doesn't work very well as a game.
Rating:

EHRGEIZ (Namco)

Do what? Beat other players to a bloody pulp. With a good range of characters, cool moves and stylish graphics, *Ehrgeiz*'s only low point is its daft name. Louise trounced everyone at this.
Pete: I'm not a big beat-'em-up fan, but this is good fun.
Louise: 'Token chick creams the boys' – that's what I call a worthwhile game.
Mark: Kind of averagely good.
Jim: Humiliated by a girlie – obviously Ehrgeiz is big tosh.
Rating:

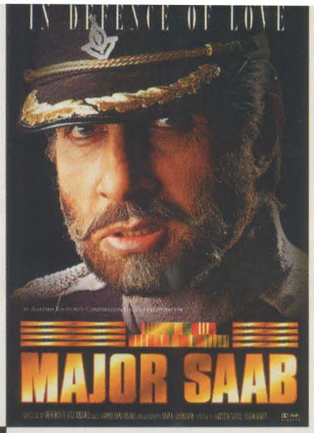


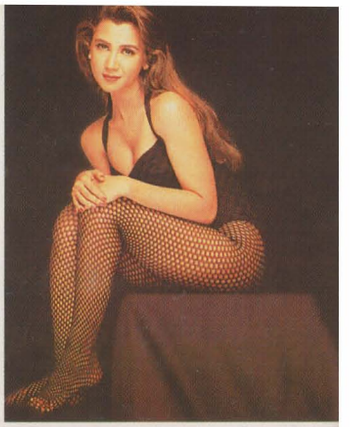
RAPID RIVER (Namco)

Do what? Paddle a rubber raft (fake raft, real paddle) down a river, through rapids, across whirlpools and through caverns. The seat tilts, swings and bucks depending on how fast you're going. But it won't make you look like Robert Mitchum in *River of No Return*, unfortunately.
Pete: Has you swaying from side to side like it's Friday night in the boozer.
Louise: Low replay value. I wouldn't bother doing it again.
Mark: More of a ride than a game, but still a really good time.
Jim: Entertaining for a while, but not particularly challenging.
Rating:

HOUSE OF THE DEAD (Sega)

Do what? Shoot zombies. You're a hardboiled detective blowing away the hideous undead in fountains of green gore and detached limbs. Atmospheric, violent and not for the faint of heart.
Pete: It's like being in *Dawn of the Dead*.
Louise: Stand back and watch that pus fly!
Mark: A benchmark for shoot-'em-ups I think. It certainly made my day.
Jim: Enormously satisfying, and it even has the bare bones of a plot.
Rating:





MODEL: ILA
MAKE-UP: KATE STRONG
STYLING: SAIRA MALIK

BOLLYWOOD

The biggest film production site on the planet is rife with scandal, violence, intrigue and insanity. Hooray for Bollywood cheers NEIL KULKARNI

YOU'LL HAVE SEEN the garish posters in your local Asian video store: a winsome vamp wrapped round the girded muscles of a mustachioed hero, knife in mouth, natty bandanna covering a vicious headwound. You'll have heard the music as you slop up your tikka massala on a Friday night, deliriously grandiose ethno-pop drowning under a sea of schmaltz and strings. You may even have caught a few clips on Asian TV or the Beeb's compulsively watchable *Bollywood Or Bust* – dance routines cast bigger than De Mille, Busby Berkeley-style formation bhangra-dancing with viciously dubbed singing and deliciously cheesy Western touches (breakdancing/handjiving/moonwalking). And you'd be forgiven for thinking that modern popular Indian cinema is a joke even amongst its fans, a cheapskate production line churning out repetitive fare for an undiscriminating audience, critically and fundamentally beyond the pale.

Think again. Bollywood is busting out all over. In an era in which the hyperkinetic violence and va-va-voom babeliciousness of Hong Kong cinema is coming under increasing political threat from its new repressive Chinese regime, Bombay (known as Mumbai to its natives) can now be seen as the authentic home of weird celluloid shit from the East. It's a whole new ocean of camp histrionics, jaw-dropping cultural oddity and shocking cinematic extremity for a Western audience ever more anxious for its hardcore schlock-jollies.

Walk into any Asian video shop in your neighbourhood and you'll find ever-increasing numbers of cineastes scouring the shelves for Bollywood's latest shot of sex, violence and mayhem. Whereas a few years ago they'd be

PHOTOGRAPHY **GINGER**

CONFIDENTIAL

scooping up Manga or John Woo, they're now clued up on the revenge dramas of bratpack Bollywood action-meisters Sooraj Barjatya or Mansoor Khan; the eye-popping musicals of N. Chandra or Mahesh Bhatt and the plenitude of sex-goddesses that play in them all. Why this sudden surge of interest in what should ostensibly be a purely first-generation immigrant market? Simple – Bollywood is Hollywood before Hollywood cleaned up. And it's keeping cinema's original maverick demented spirit alive. Lights, cameras, chalu…

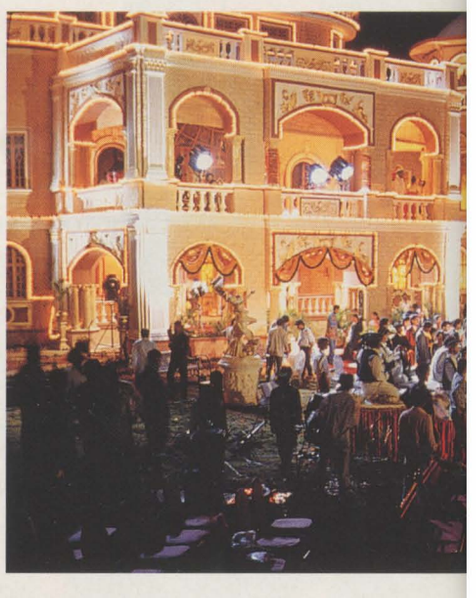
BOLLYWOOD'S HISTORY IS that of India itself, or rather India and its relation to the West. Until the early 1970s, Indian cinema, the social realist school of Mehboob and Satyajit Ray apart, didn't offer up the known genres of comedy, tragedy, musical, thriller, romance. In the fleapits and grand post-War picture houses, Bollywood showed musical melodramas and nothing but: a dash of comedy, initially thwarted love, a bit of suspense, plenty of songs, a long-suffering matriarch and a happy ending.

By 1973, and the emergence of Bollywood's first modern star, Amitabh Bachchan (who became the dominant male lead for the next ►

Clockwise from top: Rita Shivpuri; Madhuri Dixt and Sanjay Dutt in *Khalnayuk*, Karisma Kapoor; film posters on Bombay Street

CAMERA PRESS, HYPHEN FILMS, TIP TOP VIDEO, RAKESH SHRESTRA OF STARDUST MAGAZINE, EROS

Madhuri Dixit: the model Bollywood Miss



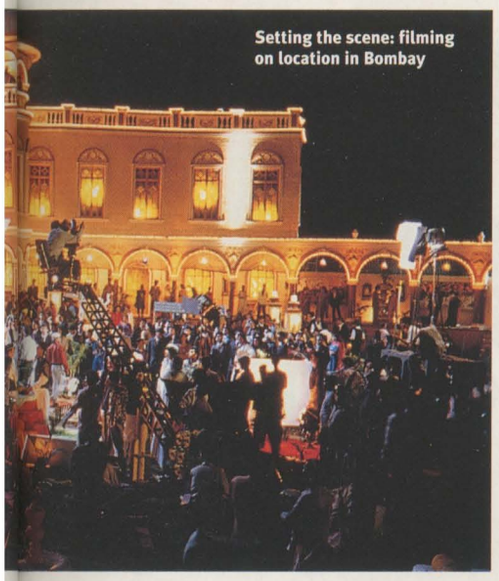
20 years) the mix began to change. Spurred on by a movie-hungry public anxious for Mumbai films to match the daring Hollywood product of the time, and aware of the advent of national Indian television, kisses (taboo in film until the late 1960s) became longer and wetter, saris were hoisted up higher, the music got raucously funky and the dancing became little more than soft-porn. Villain and hero became indistinguishable; the chaste heroines of the 1940s and 1950s replaced by outright vamps.

Whilst onscreen the vulgarisation was plain, behind the scenes the ructions were even shadier. Funded mainly by Black Market money (funnily enough, laundered through the gigantic street-based scam of phoney cinema tickets) Bollywood directors found themselves in hock for production costs to local Mafia-style gangs. Fronted by name 'financiers' these gangs formed alliances with stars in order to guarantee them work, then forced the stars in turn to place stupendous demands on producers, which their corrupt backers insisted they co-operate with. A cycle of bad debt, favour, intrigue and backhanders ensued.

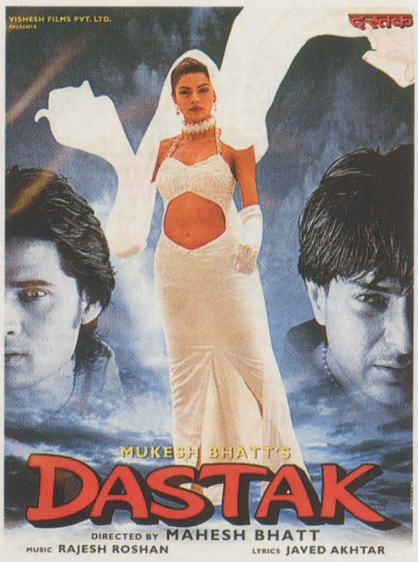
Based in the city state of Dubai on the Persian gulf, what Indians call 'The Underworld' maintains a steely underhand in Mumba movie-making; reinvesting illegal earnings in legit film-production and gaining a *caché* of reflected glamour in the process. Don of Dons, Dawood Ibrahim bankrolls much Bollywood product, other lesser 'families' entertain stars at weekends and send out hit-squads to errant producers and directors.

In 1997, small-time producer Mukesh Duggal was murdered for failing to keep up payments and gunmen were sent to the offices of hit director Rajiv Rai. Even the moguls are not safe: Mumbai police recently revealed that they'd foiled a plot against top director/producer Subhash Ghai. And most infamously, hugely-successful music biz impresario and bad-boy Gulshan

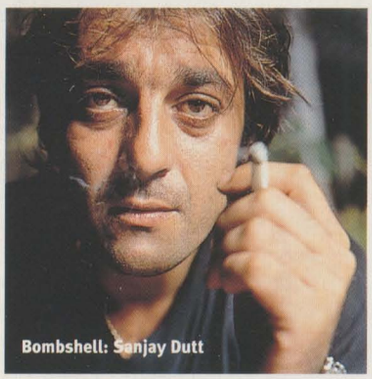
All Bollywood stars go through lovers, drugs, murder threats and kidnapping



Setting the scene: filming on location in Bombay



Kumar was slain by gunmen after he tried to take over Bollywood's film industry without the nod of the Underworld.



Bombshell: Sanjay Dutt

IN 1993, NOTED coke-addict and Bollywood *enfant terrible* pin-up Sanjay Dutt came unstuck. Having been friendly with Dawood Ibrahim's Underworld gangs throughout the 1980s, he found himself indicted and arrested for terrorism connected to the bus-bombs that ripped through Mumbai slaughtering 500 people on 12 March. This outrage was apparently set up by the same Underworld gangs funding Bollywood film.

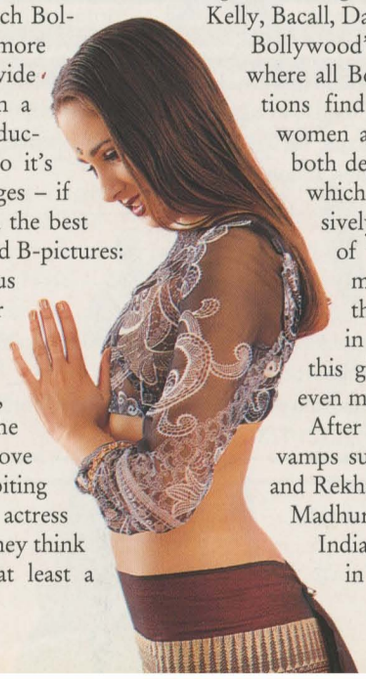
This underlying frisson of criminality undoubtedly appeals to the sleaze-hungry Bollywood audience. It also serves to ensure that making a Bollywood film is a hectic, shoestring, guerrilla business. Making more movies (over 900 a year) for less money and bigger profits (each Bollywood film can be shown in more than 10,000 cinemas nationwide to an audience of 14-million a day) than any other film-production centre on the planet. So it's only natural that what emerges – if shooting is completed – is in the best traditions of 1940s Hollywood B-pictures: lurid sensationalism, ludicrous hype and a frenetic turnover of stars, starlets and victims.

Scour any of the gossip-rags (*Cine-blitz*, *Showtime*, *Stardust*) and in amidst the *Hello*-style 'I'm ready to love again' pieces and the back-biting interviews (every Bollywood actress holds nothing back on what they think of their rivals) you'll find at least a dozen pages of prime *Hollywood Confidential*-style tittle-tattle. Replete with catty innuendo, bitchy gossip, outright slander and salacious kiss-offs it's all couched in the kind of argot last used when The Mob ruled the Hollywood roost.

It's a milieu that fascinates because it resolutely refuses to clean up, get healthy or hide anything. All Bollywood stars go through lovers, drug addictions, unwanted pregnancies, murder threats, kidnap ordeals and terminal illnesses at a rate of two dozen a year, and the fan-mags give it to the punters from Bombay to Leicester uncut, desperately confessional and delightfully hush-hush. It's like being a real movie fan again; your hunger for sensation sends the stars into mad career spins, angst-ridden trysts and triumphant rebirths. And when it comes to Bollywood's stars, we're talking the most glamorous women since Kelly, Bacall, Davis and Hepburn.

Bollywood's glamourpusses are where all Bollywood's contradictions find their zenith. These women appear in films which both degrade and exalt them, which are the most compulsively watchable artefacts of trash currently being made anywhere. For the Indian fans, locked in poverty looking up at this giddy glamour, this is even more important.

After the 1970s trend for vamps such as Sherms Tagore and Rekha came to a dead-end, Madhuri Dixit came to typify Indian films' new heroines in the epochal 1985 ►



BOLLYWOOD BABES

MADHURI DIXIT

Hubba hubba: Madhuri Dixit has been the number one female star in Bollywood for a decade despite fierce challenges. Beyond her stunning looks she can kick ass and dance up a storm like Ginger Rogers crossed with Cynthia Rothrock. See everything she's in but particularly 1997's *Koyla* for some unmissable wet Punjabi-suit action.

MANISHA KOIRALA

The Joan Crawford to Madhuri's Bette Davis (with just as many off-screen catfights and even more mutual bitching) Koirala has an ethereal beauty that makes her Bollywood's thinking-man's top totty: see her at her best in Anil Kapoor's *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha* (1995) or Mani Ratnam's bruising *Bombay* (1996) where her love for a Muslim (Arvind Swarmy) quells riots and cures global religious intolerance in one fell spate of rumpo. Looking at her you can believe it.

KARISMA KAPOOR

Bollywood's first star for the next century and Asia's own Spice Girl, Karisma Kapoor made her name in a series of saucy comedies with co-star Govinda and director David Dhawan. The first actress to emerge from the 50-year Kapoor dynasty, she combines funky looks with a fondness for ballsy tough roles (although she's not averse to the odd bit of blatant exhibitionism now and then). Check her in 1995's memorably silly *Coolie No. 1* for the hottest dirty dancing Bollywood's every thrown up, and 1997's *Raja Hindustani* for the sexiest spoilt little rich girl this side of Alicia Silverstone.

JUHI CHAWLA

Every Bollywood fan's fantasy girl-next-door, Juhi's daft as a brush (in a recent interview she says, "if I hadn't have joined films, I'd have designed table-cloths") and has carved a career in even dafter movies – always perky, always dizzy, and scantily clad as often as humanly possible. She can't act for toffee of course. Mumbai's own Jane Mansfield and official tart-with-a-heart looks stunning in *Darr* (1993), *Duplicate* (1996) and *Deewana Mastana* (1997). Turn the sound down. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

AISHWARYA RAI

Ex-Miss World turned Bollywood queen, Rai was lambasted for early failures and now languishes in limbo after a string of bad relationships and vicious put-downs from suspicious rivals. Christened 'Superbitch' by pretty much every other woman in Bollywood, Rai will return soon, a hardened, bitter goddess. Watch this space for tantrums and OD dramas.

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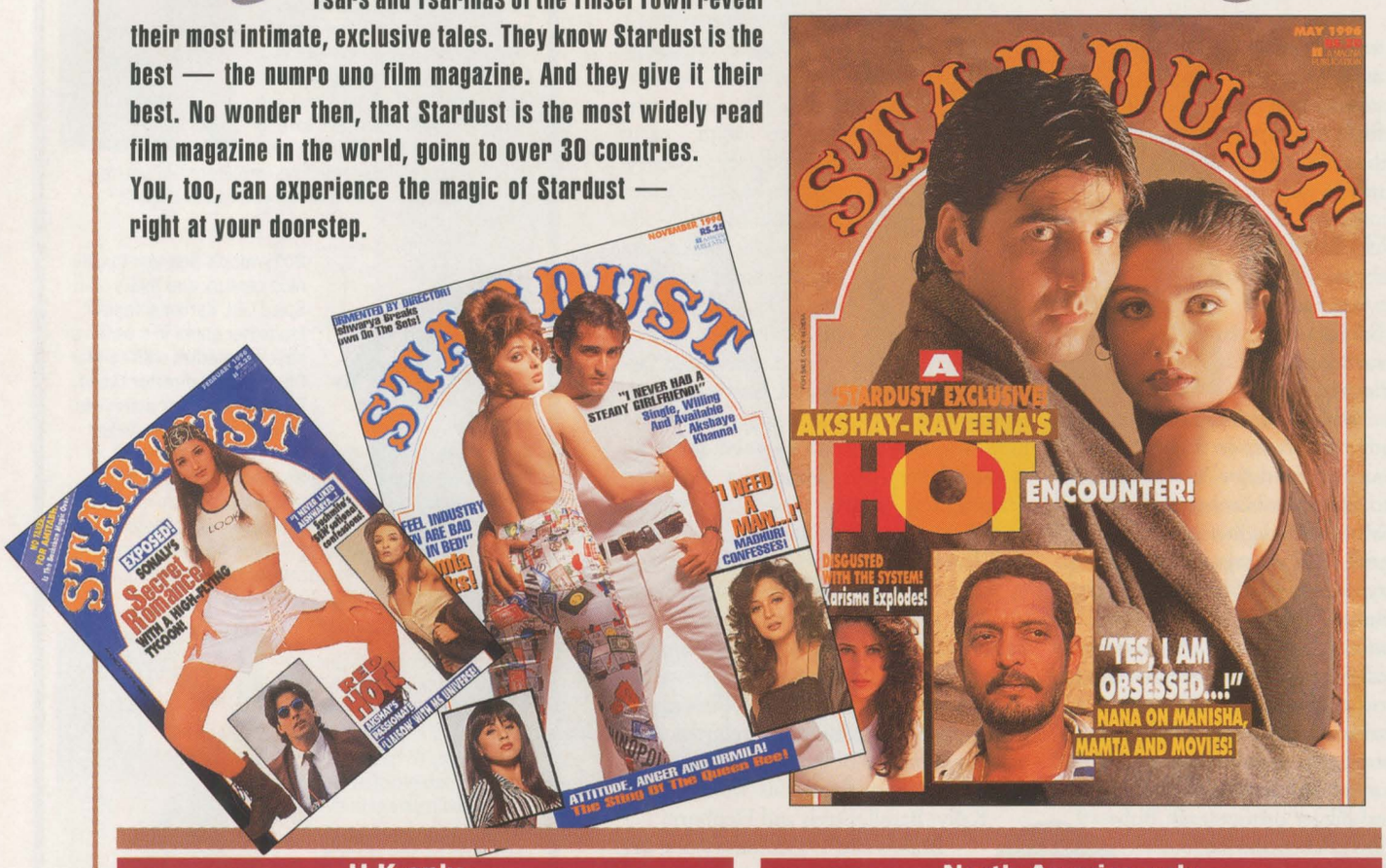
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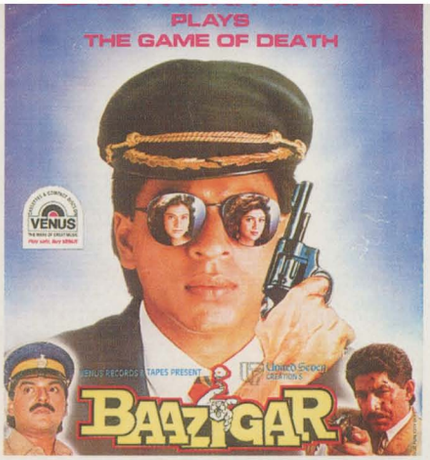
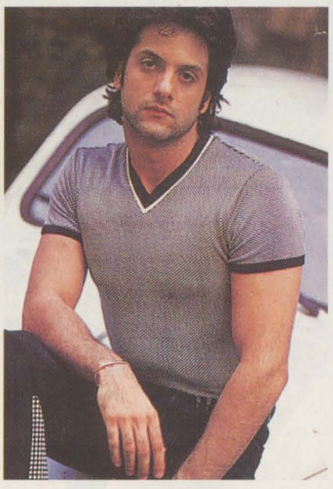


mega-hit *Tezaab*. Since then Bollywood's turnover of starlets (of whom Sridevi, Manisha Koirala, Karisma Kapoor, Juhi Chawla, and Aishwarya Rai are prime examples) have been of a singular incarnation. Man-hungry but independent, femme fatales but deeply feminist, soft but hellishly randy, highly proficient at kung fu (a must for attempted rape scenes) but still able to lead a 300-strong chorus line of heavily turbaned robotic dancers through a 20-minute wig-out without chipping their nail varnish.

Set against them, the male stars of Mumbai movies are doltish, hairy-chested, feathery-barneted springboards and don't the directors know it. Get any 18-certificate Bolly movie and you'll be guaranteed enough softcore nipple-focused lechery and long, lingering steadi-cam's up the wazoo to keep the local Kleenex shop in clover for weeks. The male stars (be it Govinda, Shah Rukh, Akshay Kumar, or 1990s Bollywood's definitive bad-guy Gulshan Grover) confine themselves to being dopey in love and acrobatic in gunplay.

From the sublime to the sublimely ridiculous: top: bhangra dancing (left) and Bollywood's favourite psycho; below: smouldering Fardheen Khan



INDIAN FILM'S DEBT to both mainstream Hollywood (many flicks are simply hysterical rewrites of US blockbusters) and HK cinema is obvious. But what makes a typical Bombay movie like 1993's *Khalnayak* – featuring Dixit singing the unforgettable ballad 'Choli Ke Peechey Kya Hai' (trans: 'What's Inside My Blouse?') – so strange and absorbing is Mumbai cinema's skewed take on foreign culture and the crudity with which it's welded to it's sub-continental narrative roots. Mashing together cop vs terrorist blueprints, political diatribes, love stories and splatter-gore, *Khalnayak* marked the start of 1990s Bollywood's anti-hero obsession: tortured good man becomes bad man, meets even badder man, kills bad man and all his relatives, becomes good man again.

What sticks with Bollywood isn't the themes though, it's the queasy surfaces. What lodges in the mind with a blockbuster like 1995's *Baazigar* (Shah Rukh Khan, Bollywood's favourite psycho, throws his wife off a skyscraper on his wedding night then slaughters the witnesses) is the hideous clatter of fashion (down-home street-wear with Michael Jackson jackets); music (demented disco) and mood (slapstick in the middle of ultra-violence, dance routines spun out of shoot-outs).

Bollywood directors don't have time to think. The massive multiplexes in every Indian city are constantly full, the magazines need gossip, the mass panic that accompanies every big new release needs sating. What has emerged is a movie-making technique that goes beyond stress into sheer bloody frenzy. It's a world where cinema realises it's enormous power by offering the morally simple, lavishly-mounted, extravagantly luxurious and brutally redemptive to an audience whose lives are often bereft of any hope of redemption at all.

It's a world where a movie about a revenge assassin (*Krantiveer*, 1994) has anarchist rhetoric ("fuck this buglike nation") so inflammatory it caused riots wherever it played and still packed 'em in. Where a woman with two sub-machine guns can twirl out of a helicopter and into her ex's wedding spraying carnage whilst singing a song about her fondness for chocolate milk (*Aatish*, 1994). A world where, so long as the women are beautiful, the synchronised-swim dancing plentiful, the music poptastic and the ending an unrestrained bloodbath, the director stays alive for another year. Bollywood is old-style Hollywood sleaze with the lid off; as close to a Pop Entertainment Mammon of Babylonian immorality, vulgarity and depraved genius as you'll ever find.

Just make sure you don't get as insane as what you're watching: when real-life Mumbai criminal Auto Shankar slew six prostitutes in a ripper-type spree in 1995, his defence, which he continued screaming until he was on the gallows a year later was: "The cinema made me do it, the films are to blame!" Of course they're doing a biopic. As soon as they've can get the songs and dance routines worked out. B

FIVE DEFINITIVE BOLLYWOOD FILMS

1. *HAM SE* (1998)
A good demo of how Bollywood rips off and twists Hollywood, this is a Mumbai remake of *Twins* starring India's own Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sunil Shai. Alarmingly violent moments of comedy break up the purely violent moments: I don't recall a scene where Danny DeVito and Arnie mow down a group of Mafiosi on a rollercoaster, but there you go.

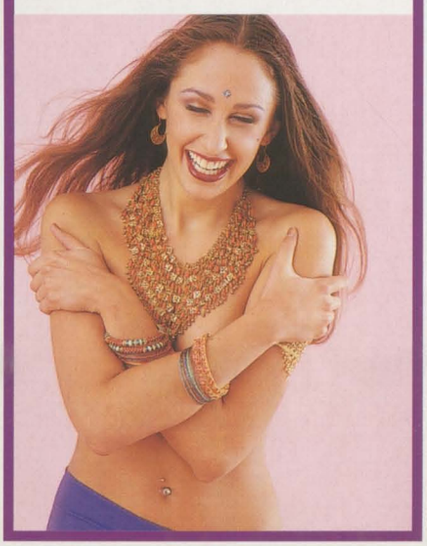
2. *BHAI* (1997)
Pretty much your bog-standard revenge piece, but definitive. As ever with Bollywood, when your brother's murdered it's always best if every time you punch one of his killers it sounds like thunder, and the bigger the giant schlotts of ketchup that spew from his guts over the screen the better. Tarantino? Kids stuff.

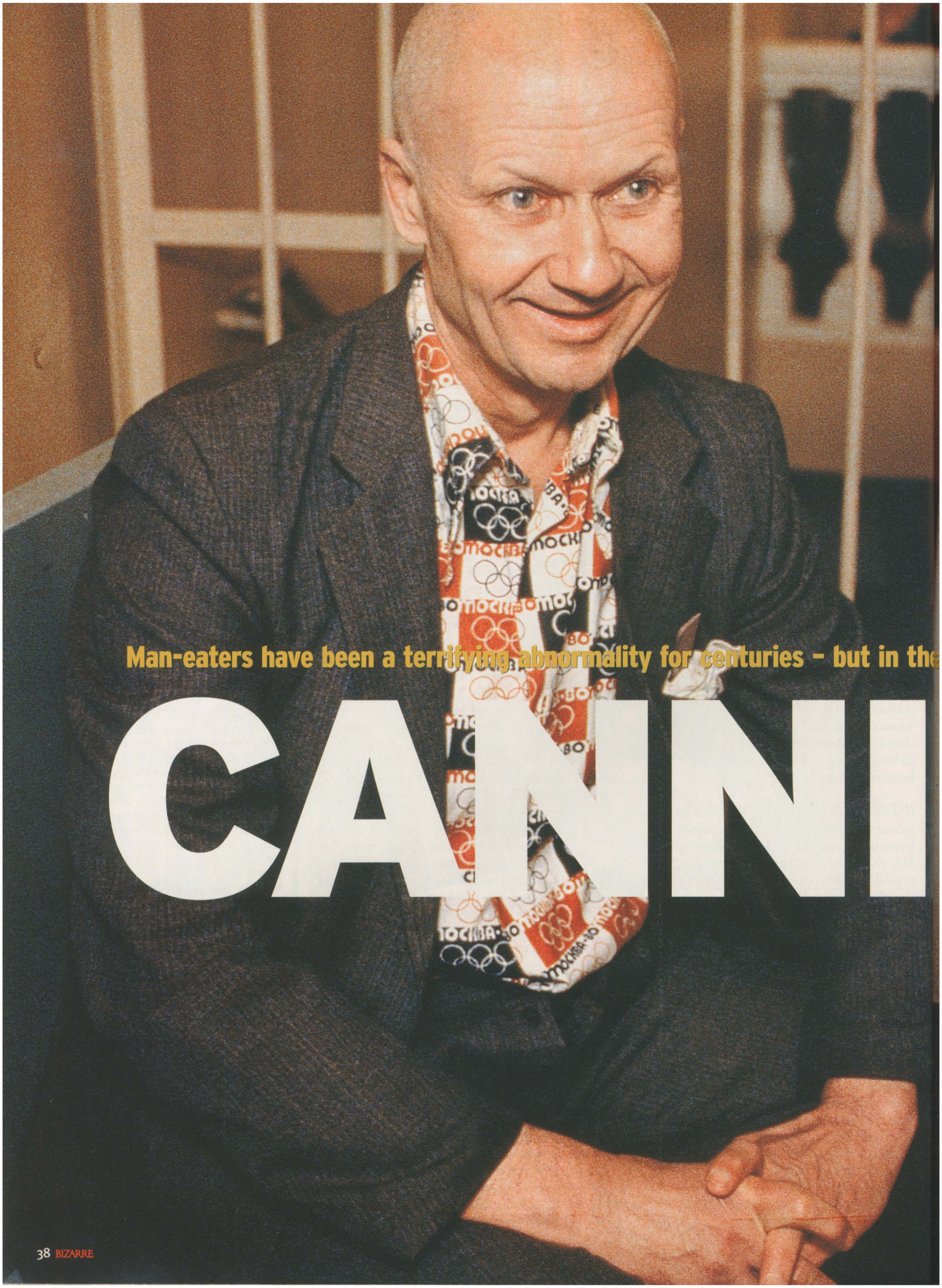
3. *ANKHARON MEIR* (1998)
The ultimate sob-inducing romantic weepy, starring new golden boy Sharad Kapoor. The songs are nauseous, the plotline impossibly tragic and the love story as soppy as a flotilla of Mills and Boon. Take a box of tissues and hope to fuck Hollywood doesn't remake this one.

4. *CHUDAIL* (1995)
Bollywood goes spooky as only it can. There are no titles so you can't see who plays the temptress witch who lures men to their grisly doom, but what she can't do with a leather basque and baps bigger than the Hindenberg doesn't bear thinking about. Arooga.

5. *GHULAM-E-MUSTHAFA* (1998)
Hollywood needs happy endings. Europe needs realistic endings. Hong Kong needs heroic endings. Bollywood needs an ending in which a man who has a time-bomb strapped to his head has to commandeer a passing tank (whilst singing) in order to blow up the gangsters responsible, get the girl, save his mother and stop his brain from decorating a ten-mile radius. Well, we've all been there, haven't we?

With thanks to Raja Videos, Foleshill Road, Coventry for all their help.





Man-eaters have been a terrifying abnormality for centuries – but in the

CANNI

A victim of Russian man-eater Andrei Chikatilo's insatiable hunger

theate 20th-century, their appetities seem to have grown. ANTONIO MENDOZA reports

IBALISM

THE ULTIMATE EATING DISORDER

WHEN STANLEY DEAN Baker was pulled up in Monterey County, California, for possible involvement in a hit-and-run accident, he shocked the arresting officer when he announced: "I have a problem. I'm a cannibal." To prove his point, he pulled from his pocket a handful of human fingers. The fingers, which Baker had been snacking on, belonged to the hand of a missing 22-year-old social worker named James Schlosser.

Baker – not a shy cannibal – boasted to police about eating Schlosser's heart raw, and claimed to have developed a taste for human flesh while undergoing electroshock therapy for a nervous disorder. A prototypical hippy Satanist, Baker is one of the growing number of modern cannibals currently making headlines worldwide.

But there is nothing new about Baker's grisly gastronomic obsession. Since the begining of time, humans have been eating humans at an alarming rate. And as we spiral towards the new millennium, human-flesh eating seems to be achieving new heights of popularity. Is this new cannibal craze being fuelled by our more basic instincts like hunger and profit, misguided mysticism or out-and-out dementia?

Or could the quintessential post modern cannibal be driven to transgress society's greatest taboo for the perverse enjoyment of tasting human flesh alone?

In the quest for an answer, BIZARRE takes an unflinching look at stomach-churning examples of cannibalism in stories spanning the globe, from the chic avenues of Paris to the frozen Steppes of Siberia ►

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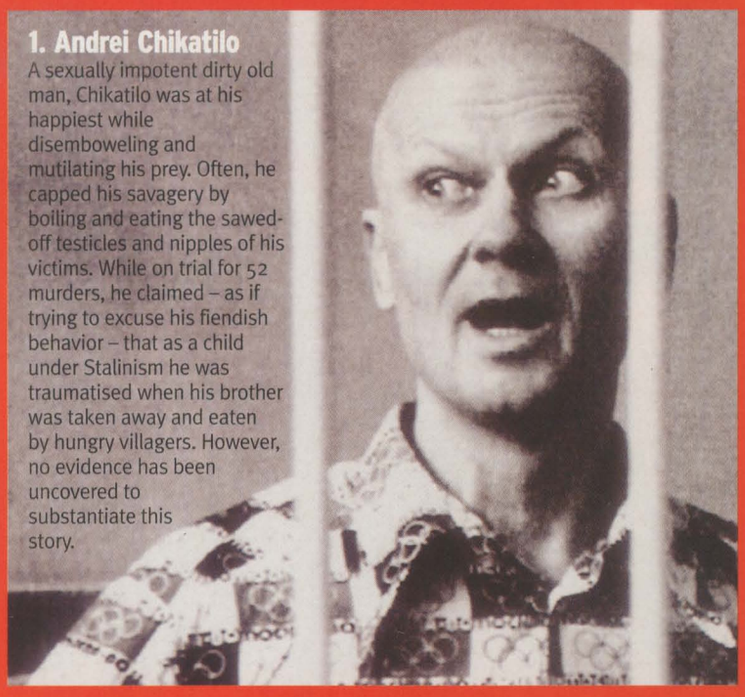
THE WORLD'S TOP 10 HUNGRIEST KILLERS



1. Andrei Chikatilo

A sexually impotent dirty old man, Chikatilo was at his happiest while disemboweling and mutilating his prey. Often, he capped his savagery by boiling and eating the sawed-off testicles and nipples of his victims. While on trial for 52 murders, he claimed – as if trying to excuse his fiendish behavior – that as a child under Stalinism he was traumatised when his brother was taken away and eaten by hungry villagers. However, no evidence has been uncovered to substantiate this story.

2. Karl Denke

A German innkeeper with a taste for the 'long pig', Denke butchered at least 30 of his lodgers and kept their pickled remains in the basement of his inn. When he was arrested in 1924 he told police that for the past three years he had eaten nothing but human flesh.

3. Fritz Haarmann

Haarmann stalked the train stations of post-WW1 Hanover searching for young boys to bite to death and then make sausages with their remains. Always the enterprising killer, he then sold the human sausages he made, as well as the clothing he stole from his unfortunate victims, in the local black markets.

Jeffrey Dahmer: bringing a new meaning to 'clean cut'

The gangsters admitted eating their victims'

CANNIBALISM AS PERFORMANCE ART

THOUGH SOME unfortunates are driven to cannibalism as a last resort to fend off starvation, Issei Sagawa, a Japanese artist with a taste for Dutch girls, was definitely motivated by something other than hunger when he munched on a voluptuous classmate.

While taking classes at the Sorbonne, Issei, the son of a wealthy Tokyo industrialist, invited fellow student Renee Hartevelt to his apartment on the pretext of discussing literature. Once the unsuspecting 'dinner guest' arrived, the slightly-built Sagawa shot her in the back of the neck, had sex with her corpse, and started nibbling on her nose and part of a breast. "It had no smell or taste, and melted in my mouth like raw tuna," he wrote in *In the Fog*, his post-cannibal, best-selling account of his dinner with Renee. "Finally, I was eating a beautiful white woman, and thought nothing was so delicious!"

In custody Sagawa was found incompetent to stand trial and placed in the Paul Guiraud asylum for the criminally insane in Paris. Through his string-pulling family connections he was transferred to a hospital in Tokyo. Within 15 months of hospitalisation, Issei's influential father decided his son was cured of his alternative dietary yearnings and managed to obtain his release. By this time, Sagawa had become something of a national celebrity, an accomplished author, and his 'Parisian affair' was parodied in the song 'Too Much Blood' by the Rolling Stones. He was even photographed for the gourmet page of a magazine chewing his way through barbecued ribs.

Issei Sagawa demonstrates his interpretation of 'going Dutch'

CANNIBALISM AS POWER

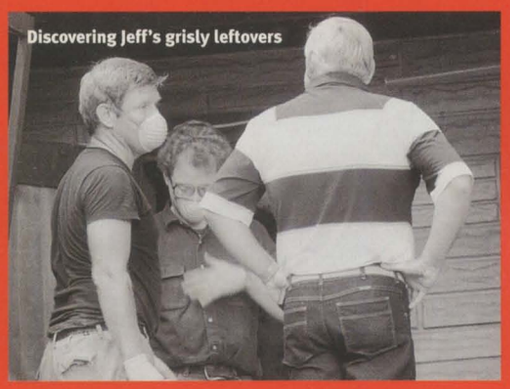
UNLIKE SAGAWA, the members of the South Korean gang known as the Chijon Family were shown no mercy for their social and gastronomic transgressions. On 1 November 1994 they were sentenced to death for kidnapping, murdering and cannibalising five people.

With the help of a mailing list from Seoul's most exclusive department store, the gang's leader Kim Ki-hwan and six fellow ex-convicts who shared his grudge against the well-heeled, planned to kidnap wealthy men and extort money from their families. Not the sort of people to stick to their end of the bargain, most of their hostages ended up dead. In custody, one of the gangsters admitted eating their victims' flesh as an act of unbridled perversion to fire up their courage and renounce their humanity.

Another example of cannibalism as a means of empowerment comes from the diamond-rich

4. Jeffrey Dahmer

The poster child of cannibal killers, Jeff lured mostly gay, black men to his Milwaukee apartment with the promise of sex and drugs. Instead he killed them and had them for dinner. When captured in July 1991, police found three dissolving bodies in 55-gallon vats of acid, as well as four heads, seven skulls, several skeletons, a penis in a lobster pot, and a heart stashed in the freezer "to eat later". In custody, the rail-thin cannibal found God and piled on the pounds. He liked to joke with guards and inmates, telling them "I bite", and once put an ad on a prison bulletin board for a 'Cannibals Anonymous' meeting. It was quickly taken down.



Discovering Jeff's grisly leftovers

Basket case: police search for Fish's victims

5. Albert Fish

New York's Albert Fish enjoyed implanting needles in his genitalia, stuffing his arse with flaming alcohol balls, eating shit, and killing children and making stews with their remains. He was arrested after sending a letter to the parents of Gracie Budd, one of his victims, describing what a delight it had been eating her. "How sweet and tender her little ass was roasted in the oven," he wrote. "It took me nine days to eat her entire body. I did not fuck her, though I could have, had I wished. She died a virgin."

flesh was an act of unbridled perversion

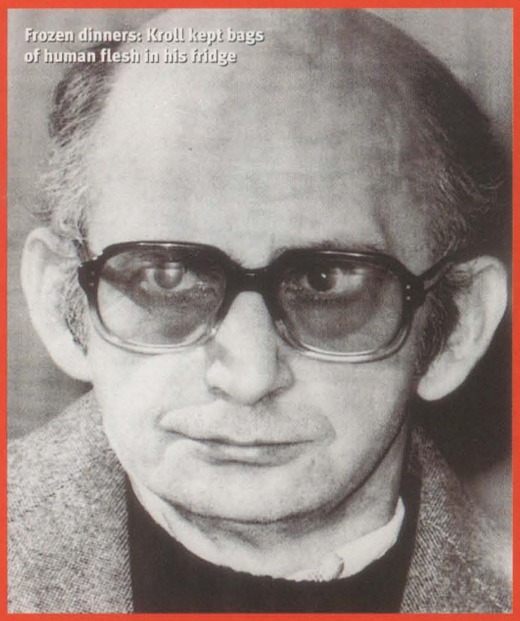
Central African Republic, where the self-proclaimed emperor-for-life Jean-Bedel Bokassa, aka 'The Ogre of Berengo', was in the habit of feasting on his enemies to absorb their strength. In 1987 Bokassa was arrested and sentenced to death for massacring 100 children, some of whom he allegedly had for dinner. Lurid tales of imperial anthropophagy describing frying pans full of human steaks and flesh stored in palace refrigerators coloured his trial, but none of these claims was ever substantiated.

The Ogre of Berengo: cannibal-for-life

FOOD FOR THE DEVIL

SOMETIMES, AS IN the case of Chicago's infamous Ripper Crew, gastronomic desecrations are part of ritualistic behaviour. When arrested for murder and mutilation in the early 1980s, the Crew was suspected of the ritualistic cannibalisation of at least 18 women. This group – which was comprised of Robin Getch (who, curiously, had worked as a carpenter for clown-obsessed serial killer John Wayne Gacy), brothers Andrew and Tom Kokoraleis, and Ed Spreitzer – formed a small devil-worshipping cult which met at Getch's 'Satanic Chapel'. There they would sever one or both of their victims' breasts and eat pieces of them as part of 'communion'.

Like Getch and his gang, Adolfo de Jesus Constanzo mixed magic with cannibalism in a quasi-religious attempt at controlling the world around him. Constanzo, the spiritual Godfather of a drug-running gang operating in the US-Mexican border town of Matamoros, fed his followers a gut-wrenching concoction made out of human brains and boiled blood which he claimed would make them immune to bullets and ►



Frozen dinners: Kroll kept bags of human flesh in his fridge

6. Joaquim Kroll

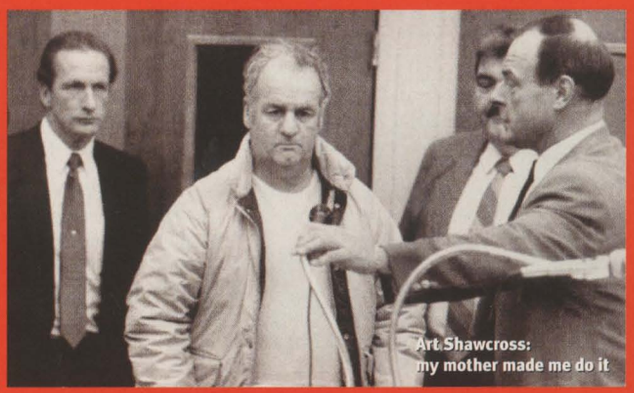
Kroll killed at least 14 people in the Ruhr area of Germany over a 20-year period. In the mid-1960s, after his sixth murder, he tasted human flesh and discovered a liking for it. On 3 July 1976, police entered his apartment and found plastic bags full of remains in the fridge as well as a stew simmering on the cooker with carrots, potatoes, and the hand of a missing four-year-old girl.

7. Arthur Shawcross

Burdened with an extra Y chromosome, Art was always the over-aggressive type. That, as well as being jointly possesed by the spirits of his shrewish mother and a 13th-century cannibal called Ariemes, turned him into a bloodthirsty killer. While serving in Vietnam, Shawcross claimed to have cannibalised a girl. Upon his return home he killed 11 prostitutes and cut out several of their vaginas to feast on.

8. Edmund Kemper III

As a child, Ed liked to cut the heads and hands off his sister's dolls. As an adult, he did the same to ten women. After spending five years in the Atascadero Hospital for the criminally insane for killing his grandparents, Ed was released to live with his mother in Santa Cruz. He promptly cut her head off and played darts with it. Ed enjoyed having sex with the headless corpses of his victims. Occasionally he had one of his girls for dinner because, he explained, "I wanted them to be a part of me – and now they are."



Art Shawcross: my mother made me do it

On the okie: Edmund Kemper III

9. Georg Grossman

Another German degenerate, Georg would bring drunken prostitutes home and have sex with them before hacking them to pieces. Like several penny-pinching cannibals before him, Grossman turned them into sausages and then sold them in the same train station where he hunted for prey. He was arrested in August 1921 when his suspicious landlord summoned the police. Inside his pad they found a just-dead lass lying on the table ready to be divvied up and put through the mincer.

Thinking he was eating a dog, Komarov began his meal. Little did

Rugby team's hunger goes into overtime

invisible to the police. Obviously the sinister brew proved ineffective when local Federales arrested the very visible Serafin Hernandez Rivera who led them to the repugnant cauldron with its simmering human stew at their headquarters.

PSYCHOPATHIC CANNIBALISM

EQUALLY VILE WAS Daniel Rakowitz's 1989 admisson of cannibalising his girlfriend, Monica Beerle, after accidentally killing her during a sadistic beating in her apartment in New York's Lower East Side. "I killed her and boiled her head," he told a friend. "Then I made soup out of her brains. It tasted pretty good." A small-time drug dealer and devil-worshipper, Rakowitz discovered that he enjoyed his first experience of cannibalism so much that he scrawled on the door of his apartment, "Is it soup yet? Welcome to Charlie Gein's Ranch East... Home of the Fine Young Cannibals."

Like Rakowitz, Gary Heidnik's cannibalism grew out of his abusive relationships with women and his willingness to break all taboos. Heidnik, probably Philadelphia's most dysfunctional citizen, amassed a small fortune playing the stock

10. Ed Gein
Ed had a knack for fashion and home decorations. An avid recycler, he found uses for all parts of the anatomy. He had a belt made out of nipples, a skin vest that he wore on special occasions, mobiles hung with noses and soup bowls made out of craniums. His unpleasant hobby was uncovered when police officers visited his isolated farm to investigate the disappearance of Bernice Worden, a local store keeper, and found her body split in half hanging from the ceiling.

he know, he was munching on his own brother

market while running his own church and gathering a harem of sex slaves whom he fed dog food and kept chained to water pipes in the basement of his home. When two of the slaves died, Gary, a resourceful type, dismembered and ate them. In an inspired twist of cruelty, he also chopped up pieces of their flesh, mixed it with the dog food and fed it to his other captives.

HUNGER-INDUCED CANNIBALISM

BESIDES THE horrible acts of cannibalism described above, sometimes humans are driven to eat their fellow man out of necessity. Hunger-induced cannibalism typically occurs in times of famine or when groups finds themselves in dire circumstances. For instance, in the famed 1972 plane crash that stranded a Uruguayan rugby team in the Andes, those who chose to eat human flesh survived, while those who did not perished. Conveniently, the survivors – throwing Judeo-Christian ethics out the window – equated flesh-eating with the will of God. One survivor recounted: "We swallowed little bits of flesh with the feeling that God demanded it of us. We felt like Christians."

In the past two years reports have surfaced from North Korea indicating that villagers, insane with hunger, are also committing cannibalism. A report compiled by Doctors Without Borders quoted a 23-year-old refugee who said he saw his neighbours eat their own daughter. Another refugee said her neighbour killed, salted and ate an uncared-for orphan. Allegedly, farmers are now leaving corpses to rot in their homes before burying them to prevent other villagers from devouring their loved ones.

CANNIBALISM IN THE USSR

ALARMINGLY, FOR THE former Soviet Union, cannibalism is becoming a way of life. Since 1996 there have been at least 30 confirmed acts of anthropophagy. In general, most acts of Russian cannibalism are fuelled by the lack of available meat, and one too many shots of vodka preceeding the cannibal binge.

Take the case of Vitaly Bezrodnov, 28, and Valentina Dolbilina, 36, who after a night of serious drinking decided they wanted to "eat some meat". With Dostoevskian inspiration Dolbilina fetched an ax, beheaded one of their drinking partners and cut flesh steaks from the dead drinker's thigh and rump. Awakened by the smell of cooking meat, Dolbilina's flatmate, Boris Komarov, joined the feast. Despite his drunken state, he noticed the meat was "a bit tough". Reassured by Bezrodnov, who said they had killed a stray dog, Komarov continued eating. Little did he know: the dead man he was munching on was his own brother.

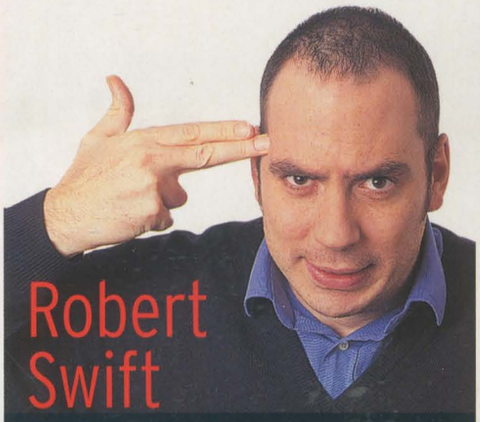
These numerous accounts of worldwide anthropophagy affirm that cannibalism transcends all ethnic and socio-economic boundaries. Are these cases of gastronomic desecration becoming commonplace or are they isolated instances of unbridled perversion? Whether committed as an afterthought to some inconceivable act of violence, or as the prelude to a fractured descent into madness, the act of eating human flesh will always be the object of our most morbid fascination. Knowingly or not, you too may have already tasted human flesh. So next time someone invites you for dinner, make sure you know where the steak tartar came from. B

What a carve-up!

Back in the days of Sawney Beane, cannibalism was as simple as gnawing on an arm, but since the advent of Ed Gein the culinary stakes have been raised and the serious flesh-eater is now presented with many options. Admittedly, many cannibals eat flesh for ritualistic or sexual reasons and probably don't relish the idea of a nice bloke-and-kidney pie, but in areas such as Russia, knowing how to efficiently butcher a human corpse for its meat can be a real asset.

Human butchery only differs from animal butchery in that humans aren't bred for their meat. The discerning man-eater will choose a victim that's likely to have good-quality meat (young, healthy, drug-free) and will allow only water for 48 hours, which flushes the system of impurities. After a quick kill, the traditionalist will go for the 'Gein Configuration', hanging the corpse by its feet. This makes bleeding, skinning and gutting the carcass a lot easier.

The best meat comes from around the lower quarter, from the leg muscles and the rump. Ribs are also meaty, particularly on a well-muscled specimen. Breasts are said to be inedible, but some cannibals get a kick from eating them. Human meat can be served like any red meat and tastes – apparently – like pork or goat.



Robert Swift

will attempt any mission, no matter how dangerous or daft, with no regard for his safety. Then he'll come back and tell all. If he survives.

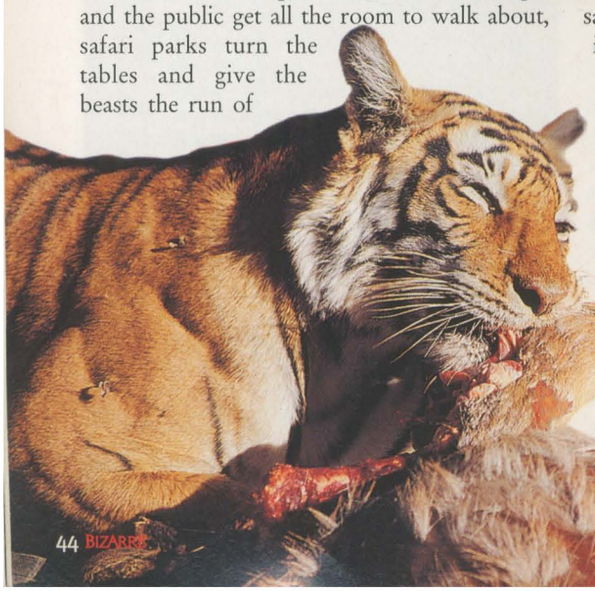
Arm-ripping gorillas, gangbanger sea lions and stampeding hippos were just some of the hazards I faced as my day at Longleat began. Then they told me the tigers hadn't eaten for three days. And guess who was going to feed them

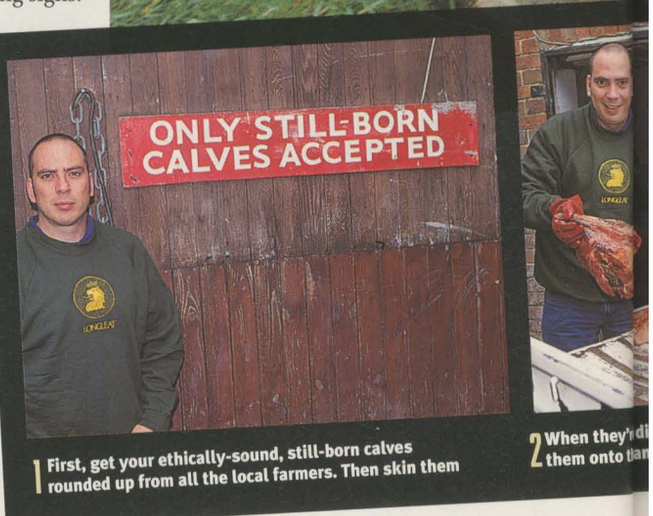
THERE'S NOT MUCH difference between being a farmer and being a Gamewarden. Except cows don't eat people for breakfast." So said one of the wardens I met at Longleat Safari Park in Wiltshire. Being a Gamewarden and looking after seriously wild animals every day might test the bounds of job security, but all the wardens I met loved their work. Perhaps it's the adrenaline, because, far from starting your career feeding parrots in Pets Corners and working your way up to fanged beasts, most wardens are thrown in at the deep-and-deadly end with the big cats. Which is why my first task was to feed the tigers. In fact it was their first meal in three days and they were expecting me for breakfast...

Whereas zoos keep the animals in small cages and the public get all the room to walk about, safari parks turn the tables and give the beasts the run of the 60 acres. Obviously not all wild animals get on well and some have a tendency to eat others, so they are kept in separate, field-size enclosures under the watchful eyes of highly trained wardens. With all these creatures walking about, hiding in bushes and up trees, it's a miracle that more wardens don't end up as lunch. At certain well-known safari parks I could mention, getting your head bitten off by a tiger appears to be part of the job description.

Entry to the tiger enclosure is through two high security fences bristling with warning signs: YOU ARE IN TIGER TERRITORY! KEEP ALL WINDOWS CLOSED. Driving in the Head Warden's zebra-striped jeep I felt like Bob Peck in *Jurassic Park*, but, sadly, without the safari suit. I asked if I could have a gun in case things got nasty out there, but these guys don't carry them! "Just don't get out of the car when the tigers are out, and you'll be fine," advised Keith Harris, the big man at Longleat. Of course I wasn't going to get out of the car into a field full of tigers – but what if one of them got in?! But they didn't think of that, did they...

A warden's day begins at 8.30am with a full check of the park to see if anything has escaped. Overnight, the park's four tigers, including the rare white female Bengal, Chandi, are kept locked up in separate cages. Which is exactly where they



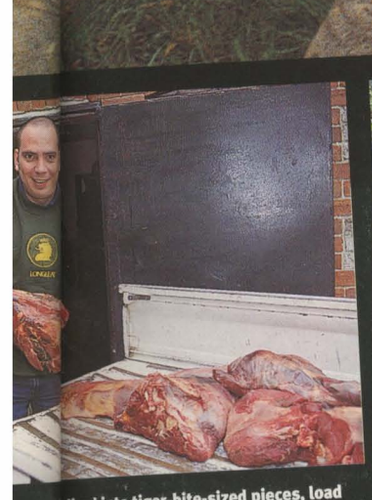


1 First, get your ethically-sound, still-born calves rounded up from all the local farmers. Then skin them

2 When they'r… them onto …

Photographs by Frank Noon

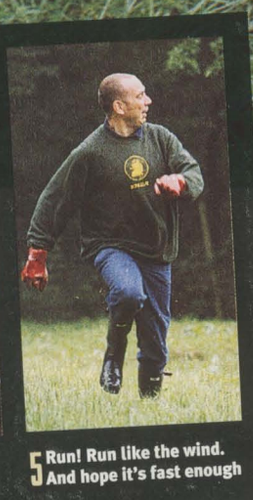
HELP! I'm a Game warden



h they'r diced into tiger-bite-sized pieces, load onto tland get ready to serve breakfast

3 Hang the delicious morsels from the trees

4 Release the cute, furry creatures from their overnight cages



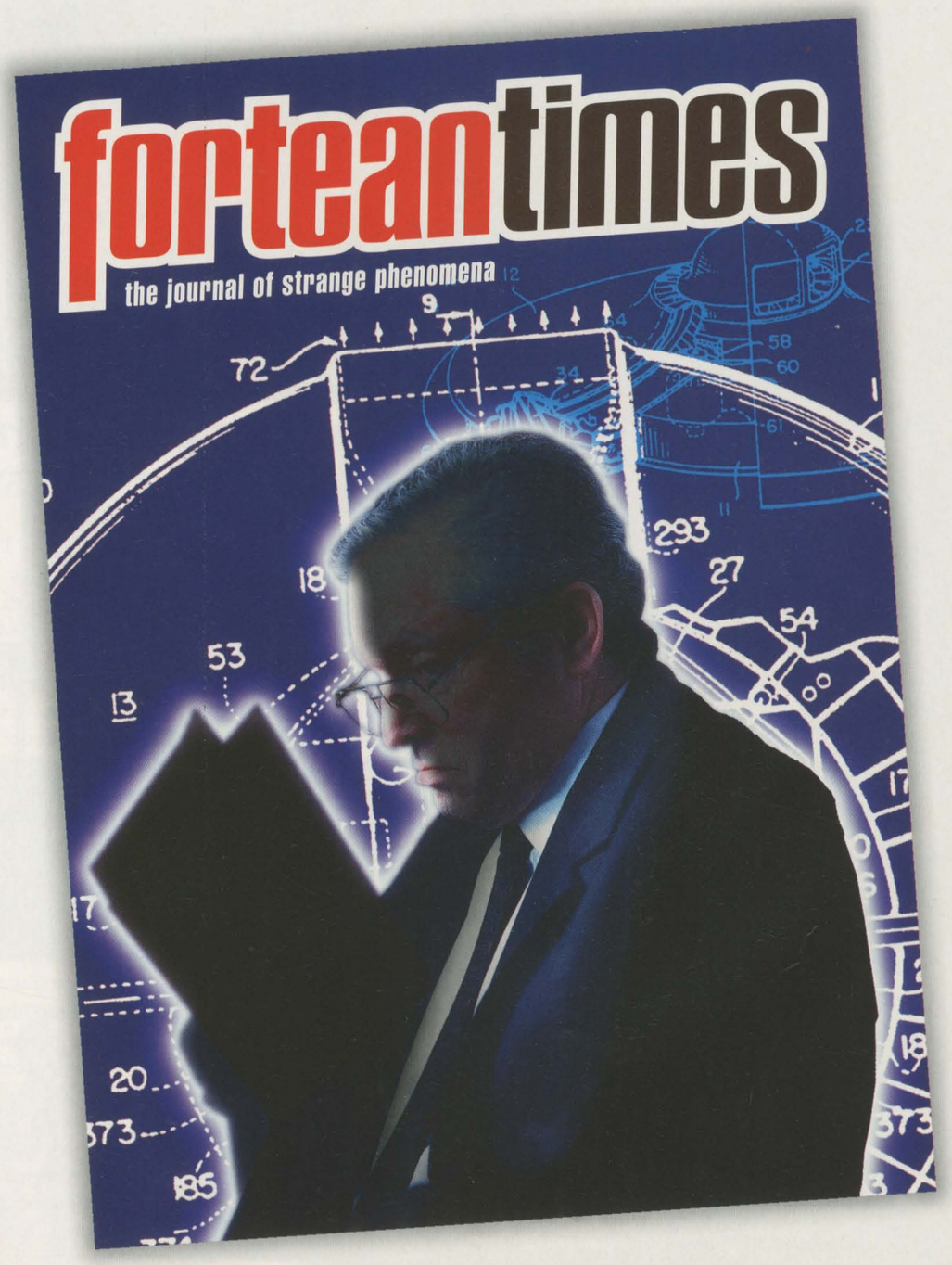
5 Run! Run like the wind. And hope it's fast enough

stayed, I'm happy to say, while two other wardens and myself sorted out their brekky. One of the pick-ups was stacked with freshly skinned body parts of still-born calves supplied to the park by surrounding farms. The huge joints, heads and carcasses are sprinkled with powders and oils to give the tigers the necessary vitamins for healthy, shiny coats. Each animal eats over 42kg of raw meat every week. The tigers have never been touched by humans and are as wild as the day they were catnapped from the jungle. To keep them that way, their food isn't given to them in bowls but hidden up trees and down holes.

The smell of the meat was hard to stomach as I ripped sinews from bones, trying to find ways of hanging huge steaks on branches. That job done, it was time to release the tigers. Of course, this isn't just a matter of opening a door and calling "Here kitty, kitty!" They'd tear you apart soon as look at you. Instead, I was locked in one cage while the animals were let out of their pens according to a regimented process of sliding steel doors. Everyone else got back in their jeeps as I released the tigers one by one. "We don't leave this cage till all the tigers have moved away ►

CIA CONFIDENTIAL

EX CIA MAN INVESTIGATES REPORTS OF CRASHED SAUCERS



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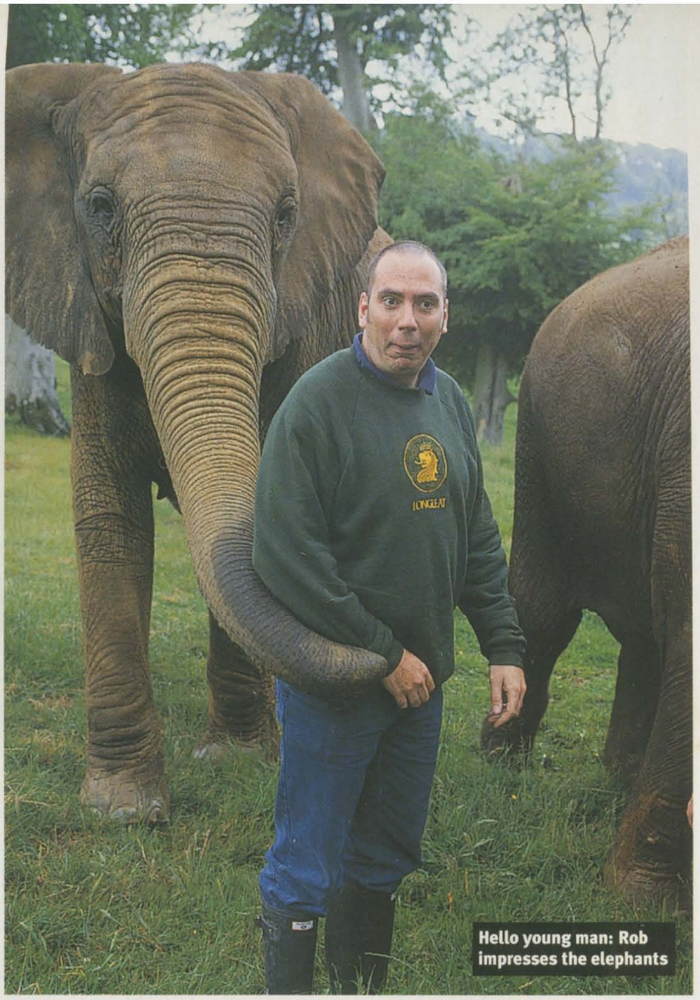
Where there's muck: Rob learns to shovel shit



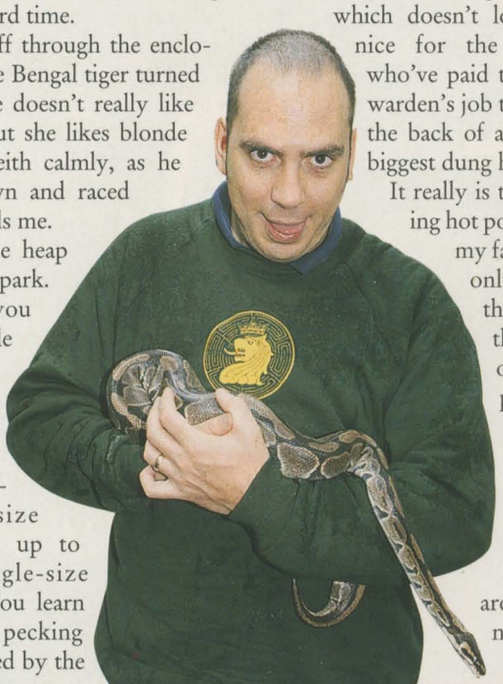
Hello young man: Rob impresses the elephants

The gorillas, our closest animal ancestors, prefer to eat their own bright yellow shit

from us," said Brian, the Chief Tiger Man who'd stayed with me in the lock-up. "Then, when they're right up that hill, make sure you've counted all four of them – they could be hiding round the corner – then get back in the jeep quickly." The closest I'd ever been to a tiger before was opening a packet of Frosties. Being in the same field as four real ones meant I got back to the jeep in record time.

As we drove off through the enclosure a huge female Bengal tiger turned on our jeep. "She doesn't really like me or my car. But she likes blonde women!" said Keith calmly, as he put his foot down and raced away. Now he tells me.

There's a whole heap of crap in a safari park. Everywhere you turn there's a pile of shit bigger than the last one, from pocket-sized monkey dump, through bigger-than-dog-shit-size tiger crap, right up to king-of-the-jungle-size elephant dung. You learn that the jungle pecking order is determined by the size of the shit. In the wild, a good Dumbo dump is a mouth-watering meal for millions of flies , the whole feast gone in a few hours. But at Longleat, a rhino log could sit there for days without being eaten, which doesn't look too nice for the people who've paid to see the animals. So it's the warden's job to pick up the shit, chuck it on the back of a wagon and deliver it to the biggest dung heap in the world!



It really is that impressive; a huge steaming hot pot, and as a warden I got to add my fair share of shit to the pile. The only animals who don't leave their crap for the wardens are the gorillas. No, these guys, our closest animal ancestors, prefer to eat their own bright yellow shit just in case they missed something tasty the first time round. And now I was sent off to meet them breath to face.

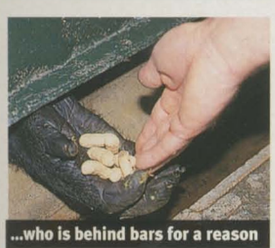
If I'd been getting a bit edgy around the Esso gang, that was nothing compared to how I felt being in with these enormous apes. "Here's the rules: don't go near the bars and definitely don't turn your back on them or they'll have you," said their Keeper, Mark Tye, who's been looking after Nico, a huge Silver Backed thirtysomething male, and Samba, his smaller female partner, for some time.

According to Mark, they used to have a chimp at the park some years ago. Trained and tamed, he entertained the kids with his PG Tips-stylee monkey business until one day he got irritable and ripped the right arm off his keeper, which rather took the fun out of things for the children. The gorillas aren't let anywhere near children; the general public get the privilege of seeing them from the safety of boats that sail around their exclusive island retreat in the middle of a lake. I got to join them in their living room. And I mean 'living room' – they even had a TV.

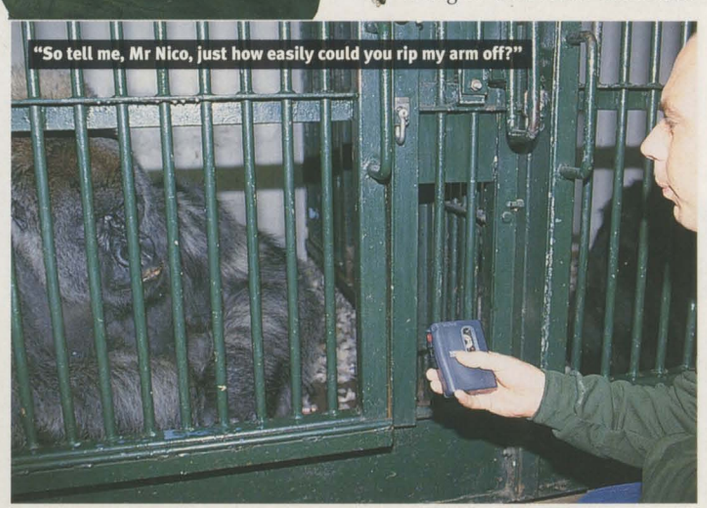
"The gorillas came from a zoo in Switzerland and had to spend six months quarantined before they could be let out," said Mark. "They got so bored that someone suggested giving them a telly. That was ten years ago and they still need a TV. It might sound silly but they like wildlife programmes. Anything by Diane Fossey, *Planet of the Apes* and anything with sex in are the best. They get very excited when they see other gorillas on the screen, especially if they're shagging."

It's essential that every warden gets to know the moods of the animals they look after. Realising that your gorilla is feeling a bit mardy could be the difference between a nice day at work or a severe mauling. Mark assured me that the noises Nico was making and his facial expressions meant he was in a good mood when we met him. "If Nico managed to get even a finger on you he'd rip you through the bars. He weighs 30 stone so you wouldn't stand a chance." ►

Feeding the great ape Nico...



...who is behind bars for a reason



"So tell me, Mr Nico, just how easily could you rip my arm off?"

If a rhino fight gets out of hand, they'll send in some JCBs to break it up

Along with their homosapien home-entertainment preferences, the gorillas also like our drinks. "Milk with Ribena is their favourite. Do you want to feed them?"

I didn't, but I did anyway, shaking so much I could hardly get the watering can full of the yucky liquid into Nico's mouth. "He likes to play games. So if you feel him grab the end of the can with his teeth let go or he'll have you!" In the end, I got so nervous I poured the drink all over the gorilla's head. Suddenly his mood changed. It was time to get out of there.

On the way back across the lake, Mark pointed out three hippos – the biggest natural killer in the park. The cuddly star of countless *Survival Specials*, with its twiddly ears and comedy walk, accounts for more deaths in Africa than Marlboro. "They're aggressive but it's not always their fault that they kill. They're happiest in water and get nervous on land. If they get spooked and you happen to be between them and the water they'll flatten you.

"It happened to me when I was feeding one of them by the water once. I looked round to check where one of the other hippos was and he was about 500 yards away. Then I happened to glance round again. The thing was about 20 feet from me and closing fast. I ran like a bastard and it charged straight past me."

Not even the sea lions are like you'd expect. "Get on the end of that pier and hold a fish up for them," suggested Frank.

"Listen," said Mark, "these are wild sea lions, not those little things you sea at Disneyland with a ball on their nose. Hold a fish up and they'll think you're stealing their food. They'd all attack you at once and they've got razor-sharp teeth. When they get hold they never let go." I decided against holding up a fish.

Surely the best job in the whole park is being the Elephant Man. Andy Hayton gets to look after Longleat's small herd of young nellies. He's been doing it for over ten years. I've been familiar with elephants from an early age too, my parents having a fine collection of ivory ashtrays, so I knew we'd get on fine. And get on I did, riding an African elephant around the park like Tarzan.

"You get to know the elephants' different personalities. Because they're young they behave like children; no attention span but good fun. That will change when the bull gets older, we'll have some trouble with him. They're hooligans and they'll wreck anything. But if they get out of hand they get a clout 'round the ear," said Andy, as he prepared their food: apples, pears, and cakes all given by the local supermarket.

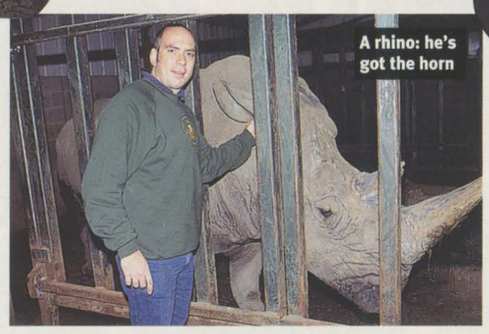
If the animals at Longleat are better fed than most people, it's because they're worth a lot more. "Elephants cost £30,000," revealed Andy. "We bought one from Israel a couple of years ago and I had to collect it at Immigration – 'What is the purpose of your visit, Sir?' they said. 'To pick up an elephant,' I said. I nearly got the full body search."

The elephants share their home with three rhinos, which, I was told, are the most well-endowed animals in the park. Behind thick metal bars, the rhinos are just big soppy things with horns who like being tickled behind the ears. Outside, in their enclosure, they're vicious bastards with the temper of your 13-year-old sister two days before her first period.

Fortunately this innate anger has never been turned on the cars that drive by these huge creatures. Instead, the rhinos like to scrap amongst themselves. Mostly the wardens evacuate the public from the enclosure then stay out of the way, waiting for these prehistoric hangovers to finish their fights quickly and painlessly, but if it looks like one could be killed they send in a couple of JCBs fitted with big battering rams to break up the fight. "You know, most rhinos are slaughtered for their horns, to make aphrodisiacs for men. It's strange to think that we might not have to protect them at all if that Viagra stuff works," said Keith Harris. And he's got a point.

Come seven o'clock, there's only one job left for the wardens to do – put all the wild animals to bed. I figured it could be a tough task getting all those vicious tigers, unpredictable lions and moody rhinos to get back in their boxes and asked Keith how he went about it. "Wind your window down," he said "and shout 'bedtime!'"

Ask a stupid question... B


A rhino: he's got the horn

Don't throw it like that...aaargh!!!

OPENING HOURS

Longleat House: Open every day except Christmas Day. Easter to September 10 am until 6 pm. Rest of the year 10 am to 4 pm.

Safari Park: Open every day from 14 March until 1 November at 10 am until 6 pm. Rest of the year 10 am to 4 pm. Admission costs £5.50 for adults, £4.50 for children.

Soft top cars not admitted. Monkey jungle optional (The only let-down of my day was the monkeys. Frank, our photographer, had lost miles of rubber trimming and countless aerials to these cheeky little fellas when taking his kids to Longleat over the years. So he took a bit of persuading to take his new motor into the monkey enclosure but I managed. Imagine my disappointment, then, when not one of the monkeys attacked his car. They were too busy shagging to bother.)

Robert Swift is available for weddings, bar mitzvahs and any strange or dangerous occupations you'd like to see tested. Send your ideas to: Help!, Bizarre, John Brown Publishing, The New Boathouse, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR

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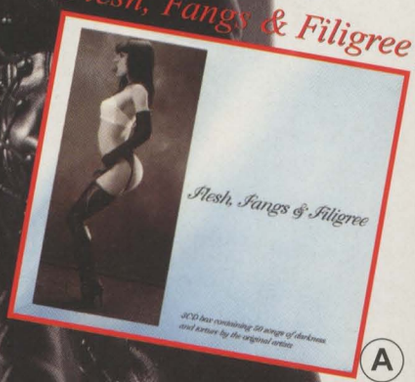

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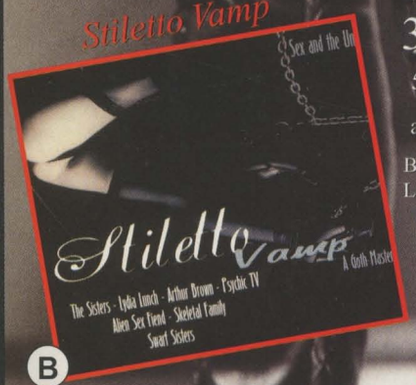
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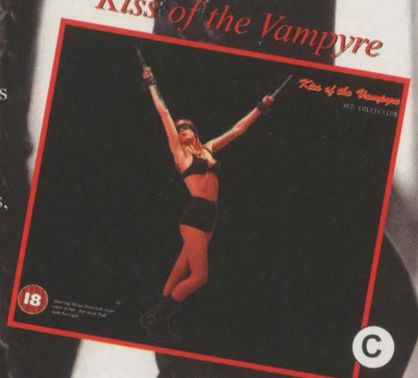

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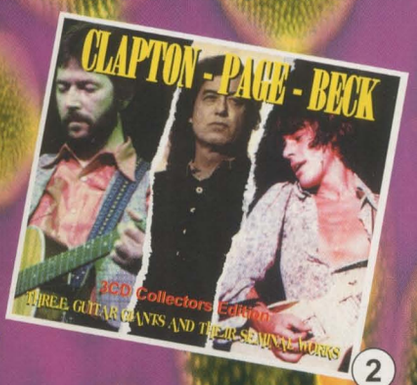

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THERE IS A well-established scientific fact that some people have far too much time on their hands. Rather than doing the sensible thing and staying in bed twice as long, these leisure junkies very often take up hobbies that make the mind boggle; pole-sitting, backwards-walking, string-collecting – anything goes in the world of the outlandish obsession. But car fanatics? That's a fairly straightforward past-time, isn't it? Tinkering around in engines and buffing up paintwork, adding fancy hub caps and maybe a decorative spoiler or two?

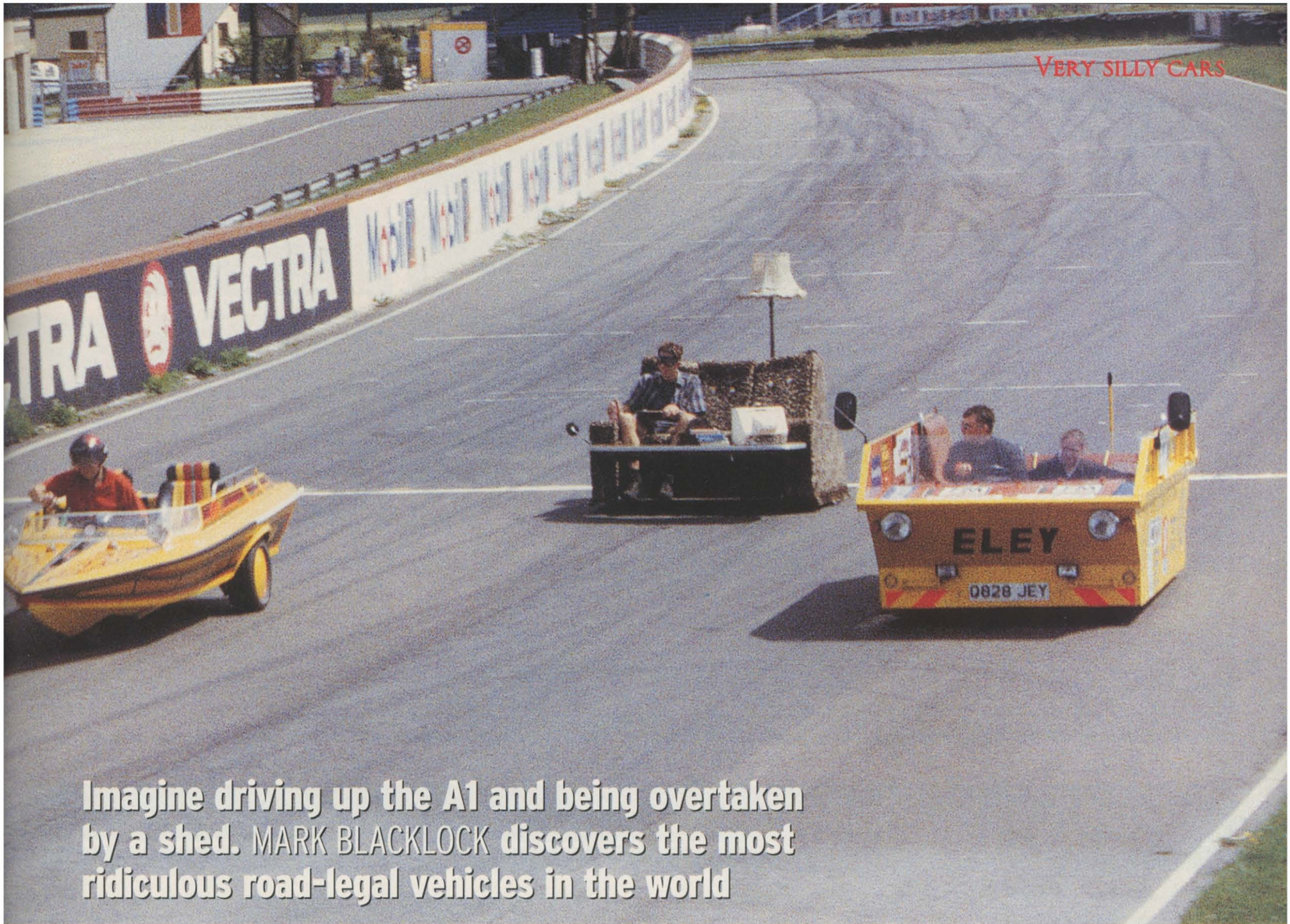
BIZARRE would like you to meet those mechanically-minded hobbyists who want a bit more from their vehicles, men for whom standard production line motors lack a certain *je ne sais quoi* that can only be remedied by serious customisation. Meet a group of individuals whose idea of fun is doing a ton in a giant vegetable. Meet the...

WHACKY RACERS

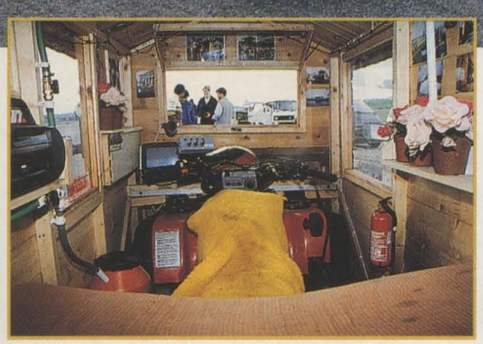
THE SPEEDBOAT
Andy Saunders comes from a two-car family. When not roaring around in his speedboat, customised with a traditional hot rod flamejob, his other motor is a spaceship

THE SOFA
Edd China is a bit of a slacker. He couldn't be bothered to move from his delightfully upholstered sofa to go out for a pizza. So he put a motor in it

Photography by Kathy Poole



Imagine driving up the A1 and being overtaken by a shed. MARK BLACKLOCK discovers the most ridiculous road-legal vehicles in the world



THE SHED
A different kind of motor home, George Sheilds's motorised shed comes with all mod cons, including running water

THE SKIP
Put a pair of wheels onto a humble skip, as Elvin Ley did, and it becomes an armoured personnel carrier, capable of speeds up to 70 miles per hour. And no one messes with you, that's for sure

GAMMA/FRANK SPOONER PICTURES, COLORIFIC!, AC PRESS

MOTORBOOTY

IF IN THE UK car customisers are seen as eccentric mechanics, elsewhere the hobby has become an art. In the US, Harrod Blank, whose camera van is shown on the right, is one of the movement's founding fathers (see http://www.artcars.com/). At a recent gathering in San Francisco, the high-heeled shoe and licence plate Madonna pictured here were in attendance, and at a different meet in Houston, Texas, Danny the Dopey Dolphin, a converted VW Beetle, could be seen flipping around on dry land.

Closer to home, but in a similar vein, French artist Jean-Paul Berton has pioneered a technique of using fish-skin to enhance his various creations, including jewellery, vases and shoes. Pictured here is a Fiat 500 he coated entirely in salmon skin.

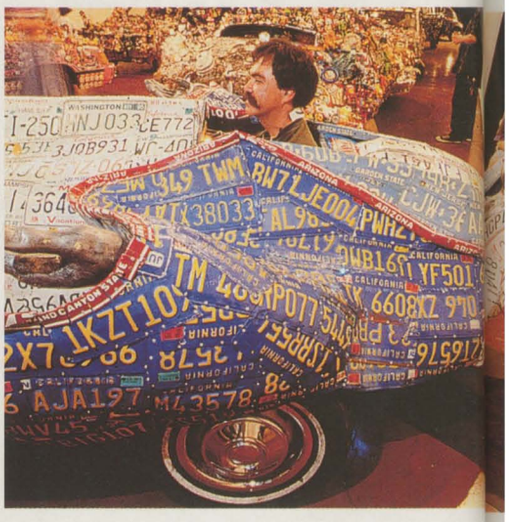
But it's not just the artistically creative who have tried their hands at customisation. Take a look at American inventor Fred Ferino's *Jetsons*-inspired Cafly, which has been altered for practical as well as aesthetic reasons. Its aerodynamic shape conserves fuel and the wraparound bumper allows it to bounce off obstacles in the event of a crash. The car of the future?

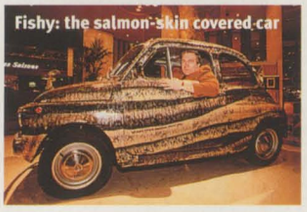
Fast 'n' shoes: va va vroooom

Hello Flipper

The Cafly: but sadly it can't fly

Space race: It's a car, Jim. But not as we know it




Fishy: the salmon-skin covered car

I am curious orange

MAD CARS SPECIFICATIONS

NAME	OWNER	ENGINE TYPE	TOP SPEED	FUEL CONSUMPTION	MILEAGE	CAPACITY
THE GOLF BALL	David Steed	850 Mini	45 mph	50 mpg	3,000	1
THE ORANGE	Outspan/Geoff Quaif (UK Driver)/Beaulieu Motor Museum	1,000cc Mini	75 mph	30 mpg	51,000	6
THE SPACESHIP	Andy Saunders	5,900cc Cadillac	120+ (warp factor 7)	20 mpg	500	4
THE SHED	George Shields	300cc Honda	56 mph	50 mpg	2,000	2
THE SOFA	Edd China	998cc Mini	79 mph	30 mpg	350	3 sitting/or 2 lying
THE SKIP	Elvin Ley	1,300cc Metro	70 mph	25 mpg	5,000	7
THE SPEEDBOAT	Andy Saunders	750cc Reliant	82 mph	45 mpg	1,200	4
THE CAMERA VAN	Harrod Blank	225 slant six	60 mph	8 mpg	60,000	6

Caddy-lack: golf ball car

The Madonna-mobile: say your prayers, driver

Flash git: Harrod Blank in the camera van

The skip, sofa, shed and speedboat are all featured in The Most Outrageous Jeremy Clarkson Video In The World Ever *released by VCI on 19 October priced £14.99*

N.B. All these vehicles are fully road legal.

KIT LIST	DIMENSIONS	HOW MUCH DID IT COST TO BUILD?	WHY DID YOU BUILD IT?	BIZARRE RATING /10
External loudspeaker, solar-powered fan and golf ball collector (optional)	6ft diameter	£8,000	To promote Greensole Golf Centre	
200lbs ballast to keep it stable, green stalk on top	(L/W/H) 7ft9" x 7ft6" x 7ft2"	£4,500 in 1969	To promote Outspan	
Looks cool	(L/W/H) 40ft x 19ft2" x 7ft6"	n/a	"I've always wanted a 1950s prototype"	
Telly, radio, telephone, running water	(L/W/H) 7ft x 4ft x 6ft	£4,000	"Alcohol"	
Working telly, speedo in clock, pizza steering wheel, coke can brake, chocolate bar gearstick, knee throttle, standard lamp	(L/W/H) 5ft6 x 8ft x 4ft	£800	"To raise money for Raleigh Int. and to build something that wasn't like a car"	
All made from recycled junk	12ft x 6ft x 4ft	£7,000	To raise money for various charities	
Lifejacket	(L/W/H) 14ft6" x 5ft x 3ft	n/a	"Dunno"	
1,705 cameras on outside, 10 working cameras, 40 cameras that flash, 4 x 13 working colour video monitors on passenger side, 36 slide viewers, PA system, CB 2 way radios, 2 stereos, 1 photon	15ft5" x 7ft4" x 7ft4	$500 originally, art value estimate $100,000	"Inspired by a dream"	

OPIUM TRIBES

Opium is supposed to be illegal in Laos but despite the West's efforts to stamp out the deadly trade, the country's mountain dens are still thronged with tourists, RICHARD S. EHRLICH **reports**

BA WAI GAU, Laos. An Akha tribesman, curled on the bamboo floor of a mountain hut, sticks a tiny, volcano-shaped plug of opium onto a crude pipe, sets it ablaze with an oil lamp, and inhales deeply.

As the flame causes the drug to splutter and melt, spewing out its coveted smoke, the addict's repetitive draws on the pipe sound like harsh bursts of static in the otherwise silent hut.

Finishing the pipe, the tribesman grins evilly, exposing teeth redenned by chewing betel nuts. He quickly constructs another tiny volcano of opium, stabs it with a metal needle to create a hole, and aims it at the fire. Other tribal addicts watch in envious awe. In the hut's shadows, an older tribesman weighs some freshly gathered opium on a small, hand held scale. Using a few sealed packets of aspirin as weights, he balances a thick glob of the brownish-black substance to determine it's price.

In another hut, an opium dealer weighs more of the clay-coloured drug against a 1937 colonial French coin which bears the words 'Indo-Chine Francaise, Piastre de Commerce'.

Laos has had a chequered history. Today, the tribes of Akha, Lahu, Hmong and others in these rugged mountains, the site of extensive bombing in the Vietnam War, continue to cultivate the poppies which bear opium pods. At the same time as smoking or eating it, they eagerly offer the drug as a cure against all kinds of ills. American, European and other foreign tourists trek up these steep slopes to smoke with the tribes. Laos recently opened up to international tourism and as a result young backpackers are lining the floors of huts for opium sessions, oblivious to the misery of addiction or overdose – especially if a thrill-seeking smoker graduates to opium's concentrated derivative, heroin.

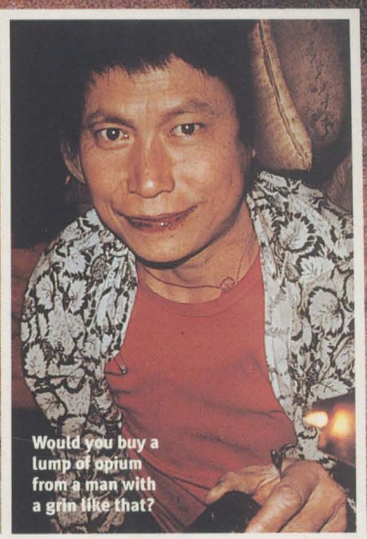
"I never realised opium was such a physical trip," says delighted 20-something Californian Aggy, who's just inhaled several pipes. "And the smoke tastes so sweet." She stares with a drugged gaze at an Akha tribeswoman and adds, "When I look into her eyes, I get some kind of feeling. A connectedness. Kindness. Communication isn't needed. Do you get that kind of message from her?"

A bleary-eyed smiling Dutch woman named Else agrees: "I feel warm in my cheeks. Hot cheeks. I felt like I was going to vomit right after smoking, but once you are high you feel like you can trek all day and you're simply floating."

For the tribes, however, the grip of opium is no transient trip. The drug has been their main livelihood for generations. Their opium huts built on stilts, with sharp, sloping thatched roofs, are outposts of defiance against international attempts to rid the region of drugs. Opium is supposed to be illegal in Laos. But the lack of government control, combined with poverty, corruption and tradition ensure that this nation's scattered opium dens and harvests are not going to disappear in the near future.

Opium's huge commercial power has influenced Laos for several decades. In the forested north-west mountains of Nam Tha Province, the US Central Intelligence Agency repeatedly tried and failed to organise Hmong tribes and wealthy opium warlords against the spread of communism in the 1960s and 1970s. ►

The opiate of the masses: an Akha tribesman shows the tourists how to get laid-back, Laos style



Would you buy a lump of opium from a man with a grin like that?

The scale of the problem: the Akha use aspirin to weigh out the opium

Pipe dreams: the Akha tribesmen get high on their own supply

A then senior CIA paramilitary officer "tried to rekindle their enthusiasm for combat by raising salaries and offering cash bonuses for Pathet Lao ears," wrote Alfred W. McCoy in his book *The Politics Of Heroin In Southeast Asia*. But despite American payments of US$1 for each blood-encrusted ear and US$10 for "a severed head when accompanied by a Pathet Lao army cap," the communist Pathet Lao guerillas achieved victory in Laos in 1975.

Sustained by Soviet aid, Laos stayed beyond America's reach until 1990, but in the wake of communism's collapse, the US Drug Enforcement Agency together with the United Nations Drug Control Agency have strongly pressured Laos to pass heavier anti-drug laws.

Laos forms part of South-east Asia's infamous Golden Triangle, which includes the neighbouring border regions of Burma and Thailand. The Golden Triangle's poppy crops are the raw currency for global heroin traffickers. But Laos has not made the same mistakes as its other opium-growing neighbours. The countries that have implemented opium suppression campaigns, such as Thailand and Vietnam, now suffer a much worse problem: the curse of heroin addiction. The estimated 42,000 addicts in Laos have not 'graduated' on to heroin because Laos is one of the least developed nations on earth and people are simply too poor to move beyond the tradition of smoking or eating opium.

However, despite their attempts to intervene, drug enforcement officials now admit that the Laotian contribution to the international heroin trade is actually only marginal. The US State Department's International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, released in March 1997, stated that "Laos is a distant third, after Burma and Afghanistan, in world production of illicit opium." A former consultant to the US congressional committee on narcotics, anthropologist David Feingold concluded that Laos does not have any real drug problems.

A dollar for each blood-encrusted ear

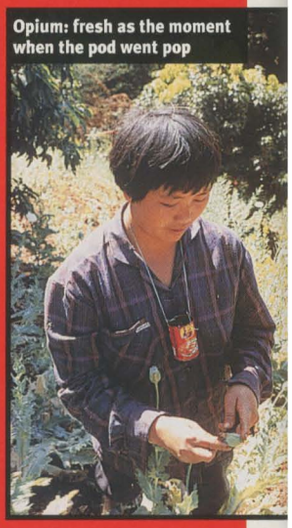
Anthropologists argue that making opium production illegal runs counter to local traditions and culture, and would rob the tribes of their chief source of income. Said Fiengold: "Why not leave Laos alone?" B

Laos lifestyle guide

● Laos is the size of Great Britain but its population is only 5 million. It is landlocked and mountainous. The Akha tribe built their villages at elevations of 3,500–4,000 feet, bolstering their security against enemies.

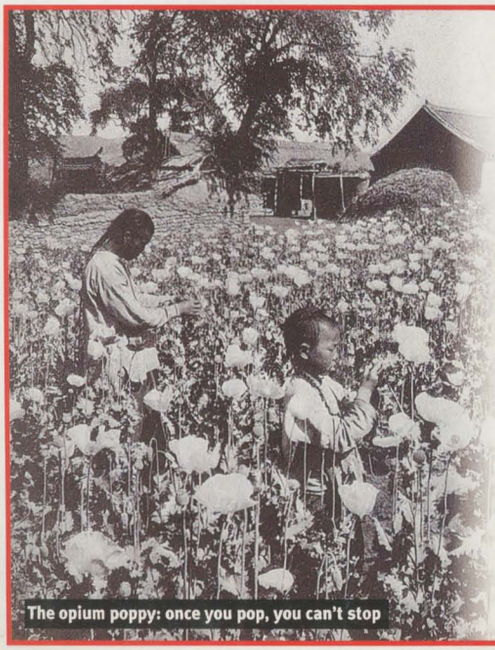
● The French tried to colonise Laos 100 years ago, but no government was able to subdue the northernmost tribes. In 1953, Laos became an independent state, but disaffection against the US-backed royal regime helped fuel a communist rebellion. The ensuing insurgency, coupled with the US-Vietnam war, resulted in saturation bombing of Laos by the Americans.

● Most Laotians worship a mixture of Buddhism and Animist spirit cults. The Akha and other tribes guard their land and homes with totems and magic. Ancestor worship is also important. To protect themselves and their ancestors, the Akhas rely on a pair of wooden gates, erected at the upper and lower entrance paths to their villages, which guard against bad ghosts. The gates also act as demon detectors. If an Akha has the feeling he is being stalked by a demon, he can stride through the gates and the demon can't follow. Gates often feature phalluses and other fertility symbols, and are saturated with power by animal sacrifices. They also display items from which the village wishes to protect itself, such as guns, grenades and AK-47 assault rifles.



Opium: fresh as the moment when the pod went pop

● Inside a tribal hut, a family's personal cluster of spirits are symbolised by a hanging basket or a prominent wooden post. When disease strikes an Akha, relatives will call a shaman to cure supernatural ills, often with opium.



The opium poppy: once you pop, you can't stop

BRITAIN'S OPIUM EMPIRE

DURING THE REIGN of Queen Victoria, the British Empire was the largest drug pusher the world has ever seen. The smuggling of opium into China was a source of huge profits which funded British rule in India and underpinned British trade throughout the East.

Opium production first came under British control in 18th-century India. In the 1760s, chests of opium were smuggled into China and by 1838, 2,500 tons were being annually illegally exported. According to Frederic Wakeman's *The Canton Trade And The Opium War*, by the end of the 1830s opium was "the world's most valuable single commodity trade of the 19th century."

Jardine Matheson was the most successful smuggling company and is still a major financing and trading house today. Sir William Jardine had sold enough opium by 1840 to buy himself a seat in the House of Commons. He went on to become a governer of the Bank of England and the second-largest landowner in Britain.

By this time there were as many as 12 million Chinese addicts. In March 1839, the British were expelled from Canton, triggering off the first Opium War. They set themselves up in Hong Kong, blockaded the entire Chinese coast and massacred thousands of civilians. The war continued until 1841, when the Chinese were made to accept British terms.

The dream traders: opium smuggling

There were two more Opium Wars, in 1856 and 1860, until the Chinese were forced to comply with Britain and legalise opium.

By the 1880s the British were exporting 100,000 chests of opium to China a year. After this, the Chinese began beating Britain at her own game by selling home-produced poppy, but the trade remained profitable until the end of the century. Britain's opium trade only ended in 1917, and the final spoils of the Opium Wars, Hong Kong, remained British until 1997.

RICHARD S.EHRLICH, MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY

"Father. What is Viz? Is it something to do with *lavatories*?"

"Never mind, son. I'll tell you about it when you're older"

Viz *the magazine that's something to do with lavatories*

New issue ON SALE NOW

GEOFF COX **and his mate James thought it would be a challenge to cycle through Siberia, the world's largest country, without the help of local guides, useable maps, or even roads. This is how they came out alive**

THE ROAD TO N

THERE WAS A shout, and as I turned around, I found myself staring down the business end of a Red Army rifle.

The Cold War may be over, but I'd wandered far off the track and in eastern Siberia, you don't want to accidentally enter a military zone. Speaking very little Russian, I tried to explain to the guard holding the rifle that I only wanted to cross a railway bridge rather than wade through a 200 metre-wide river, but as I attempted to continue, he raised his rifle again.

A long, tense stand-off followed, until two further armed guards appeared to escort us across the bridge. However, the escort continued over the bridge and to the nearby barracks, where the Commanding Officer demanded to know what two cyclists were doing here. "We're from England, and we're cycling across Siberia to Vladivostok," was the answer. He looked at us as if we were completely insane, but he finally

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GEOFF COX

OWHERE

agreed to let us go on our way, chalking up another hazard to the long list we'd already encountered on a seven-month-long bicycle trip.

Cycling across Siberia was a plan I'd hatched in England with my friend James who seemed equally unafraid of the potential pitfalls of such a scheme. We only knew of three previous trips by Westerners across Siberia by bike, and none without native guides, as we were planning. Crossing Russia meant crossing the largest country in the world on two wheels, covering over 9,000 miles, nine time zones and uncharted tracks. No wonder my mates thought I would never make it.

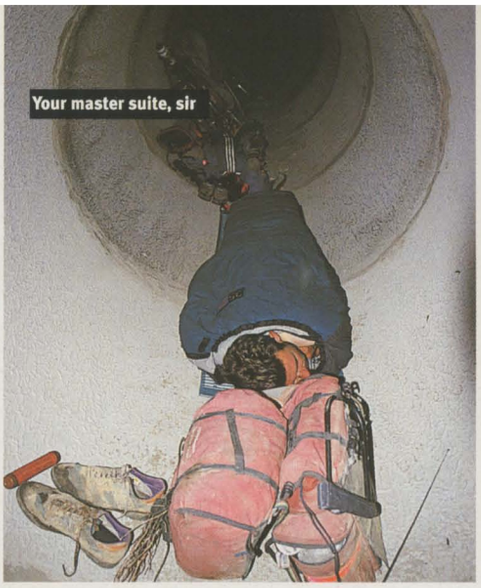
It took six months to get the necessary invitations and visas. During this time we collected the kit we thought we'd need for the trip and packed it onto traditional touring bikes, the kind that are built for reliability. As a precaution, we also packed enough spare parts to cover every eventuality. We had to secrete our money – around US$3,000 each – in our luggage, the tubes of our bikes, the handlebars and anywhere else we could think of.

Merely getting to Russia involved trekking 2,000 miles through snow-covered Europe, a journey that took two weeks, before we reached Moscow. From there we travelled east, to the large Communist-style towns of Samara and Ufa. A few days further east lay the Ural mountains, which mark the end of European Russia, the beginning of Asia and the start of Siberia.

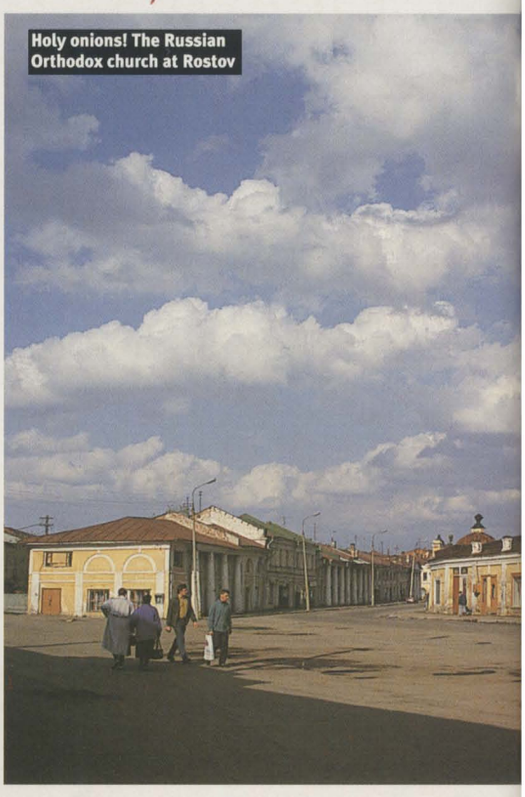
We'd left Ufa in 35 degrees of heat; when the wind changed direction the warm southern desert air was replaced by the northern Siberian ice-wind. Temperatures plummeted to -3° in the space of a day and snow began falling. From then on, we realised we had to cross Siberia before winter set in. This is a country that has no spring or autumn, just hot summers and harsh winters. Snow could come as early as September and winter temperatures can drop to -50°. To avoid leaving our perfectly preserved corpses in a distant ice-floe, we needed to move fast. ►

Lenin still rules in Ulan Ube

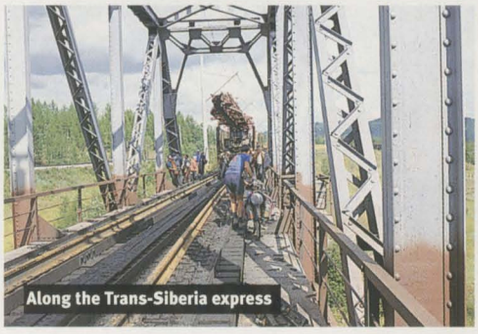
Through hell and high water: crossing the river at Skovrodino



Your master suite, sir



Holy onions! The Russian Orthodox church at Rostov



Along the Trans-Siberia express

Vodka: a drink for all the family

When we say dirt track, we mean it

Don't pay the Lithuanian ferryman

The two most important things to the long-distance cyclist are food and water. Uncannily, the Russian for water – *voda* – sounds almost the same as the Russian for vodka – vodka. We discovered this pitfall early on, in the village of Sazanova, where we stumbled across a family having a party in the street outside their house.

Handing over my water carrier, I asked for *voda*, but instead we were offered fresh milk and invited to join in their meal of salted pork fat and fresh fish. Then out came the vodka, and after that the afternoon turned distinctly surreal. I got my camera out to take some photos and one woman started doing impressions of a cow. After a while, I realised she wanted me to take pictures of her cow, and followed her, expecting to be taken to a barn. However, I was amazed to find the cow inside the house. When we finally left, we still had no water, but had had our first taste of Russian hospitality.

Looking at a map of Siberia, there's a stretch of around 800 miles around the Chinese border where there are no roads at all. That's the equivalent of getting on your bike in London and riding up to Scotland and back without ever seeing a stretch of tarmac.

The Russians produce a large road atlas for the whole country – only where there's no road, there's no page on the map. For this reason, we'd bought US Arial Defense maps of the region with us, but whilst these were great for showing terrain, they were useless for forest tracks.

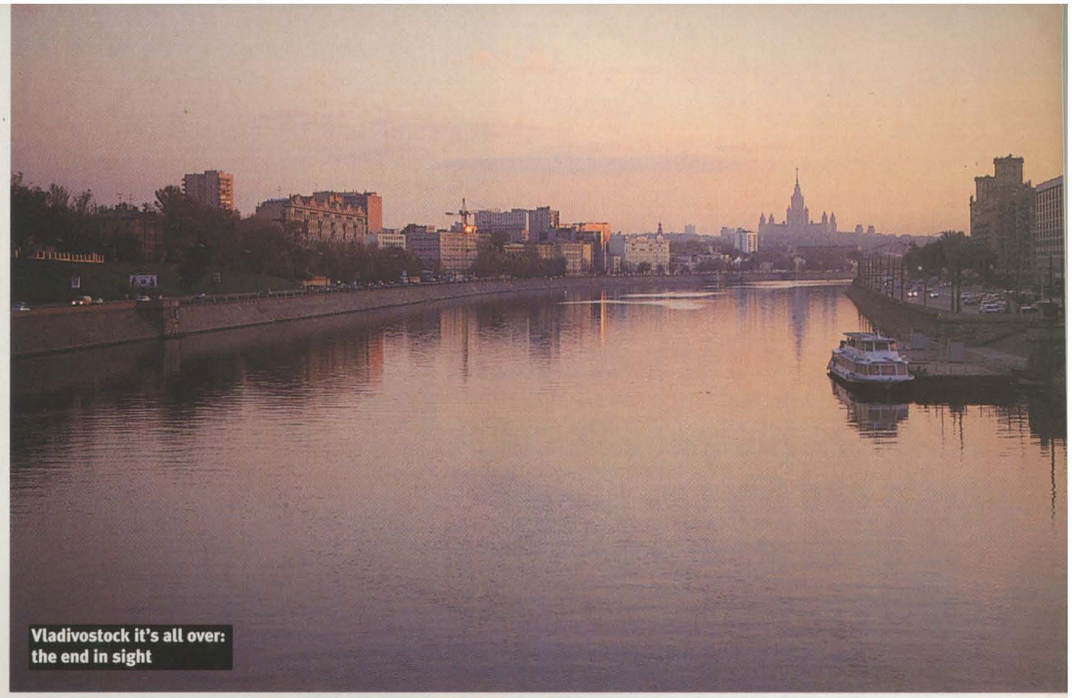
We realised what we were up against a couple of days after leaving the town of Chita when the Trans-Siberian highways petered out into a dirt track, and then ended without warning, plunging us knee-deep into a muddy bog through which we had to push bikes weighing 50lbs each. The only piece of solid land around us was the Trans-Siberian railway, which cuts right across the country. It was time to heave the bikes up the embankment and walk along the line.

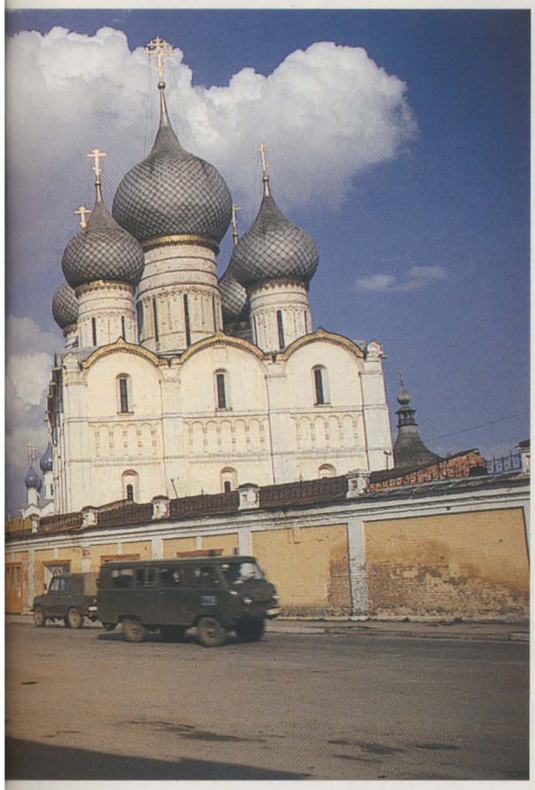
The large gap between the sleepers makes it impossible to ride a bike along the track, so we ended up walking along the sleepers, pushing our heavy cycles through the shingle between the tracks. Though it obviously makes sense to walk along the side of the line, so that you can see the trains approaching, the downside of that is that you then spend your time walking through the trail left by the train toilets. The boredom of trudging slowly along the railway was therefore alleviated by counting the used Tampax and disposable nappies that littered our path. Walking along the shit-splattered tracks was an education in the dietary habits of the Siberian rail-traveller.

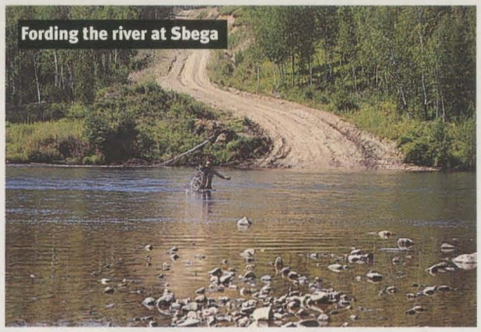
But there were far greater hazards here than mere sewage. On the first day we walked along the railway, we misjudged the frequency of the trains. As one great freight train hurtled towards us, we casually crossed over to the other track, ignoring the driver who was waving frantically. Turning around, we realised why his gesticulations were so crazed. Another train was headed down the track towards us at high speed.

With no time to lift the bikes over the rails and down the embankment, we threw them into the

Tanks for the memory: V Day in Moscow

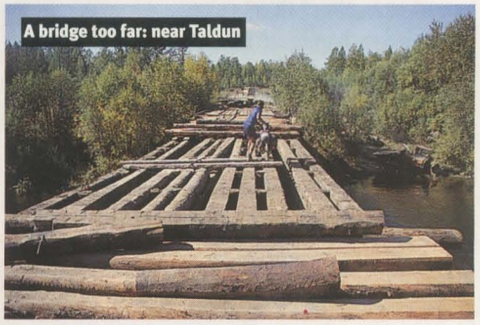

Vladivostock it's all over: the end in sight




Fording the river at Sbega

Part of our luxury accommodation

Meeting more sensible bikers


A bridge too far: near Taldun

gap between the two tracks and dived in after them. Down at floor level there is slightly more space, but as the wheels of the two enormous freight trains thundered past mere inches away, we didn't want to think about what would have happened had we misjudged the gap.

On one occasion a train driver stopped and offered us a lift, but with the stubborn determination born of insanity, we turned him down. If we were going to bike/walk across the whole of Siberia, we were going to do it properly, no matter what the cost. Crossing Europe we'd generally covered between 80-100 miles a day. But in this roadless region of Siberia we'd find ourselves walking for 11 hours and covering only 20 miles. With 300 miles still to Vladivostok, the end seemed an eternity away.

An airborne menace also struck home in the Siberian forests. We hadn't realised, but the idyllic birch trees were infested with swarms of mosquitoes which were immune to our traditional Western insect repellent. Nothing seemed to quell their bloodlust, and they'd bite through clothes, hair, eyebrows and many more painful places. The only way we found of dealing with the bastards was to sit in Goretex waterproofs with metres of cloth wrapped around our heads. Mozzies don't like smoke, so once our camp was set up, we'd light a fire and sit drenched in sweat as the temperature rose.

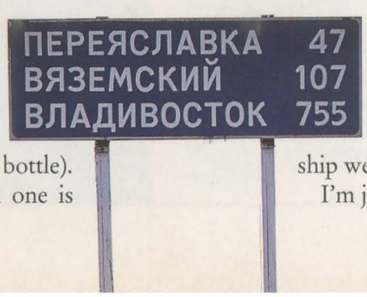
We had been more worried about bears. The locals were always asking us if we'd had any problems with them, and one Russian had even given us an army flare with instructions to fire it at bears and tigers! In the end, we saw neither and never used the flare. Of all the perils we faced, the one thing we really needed saving from was the vodka.

One Russian had given us an army flare with instructions to fire it at tigers

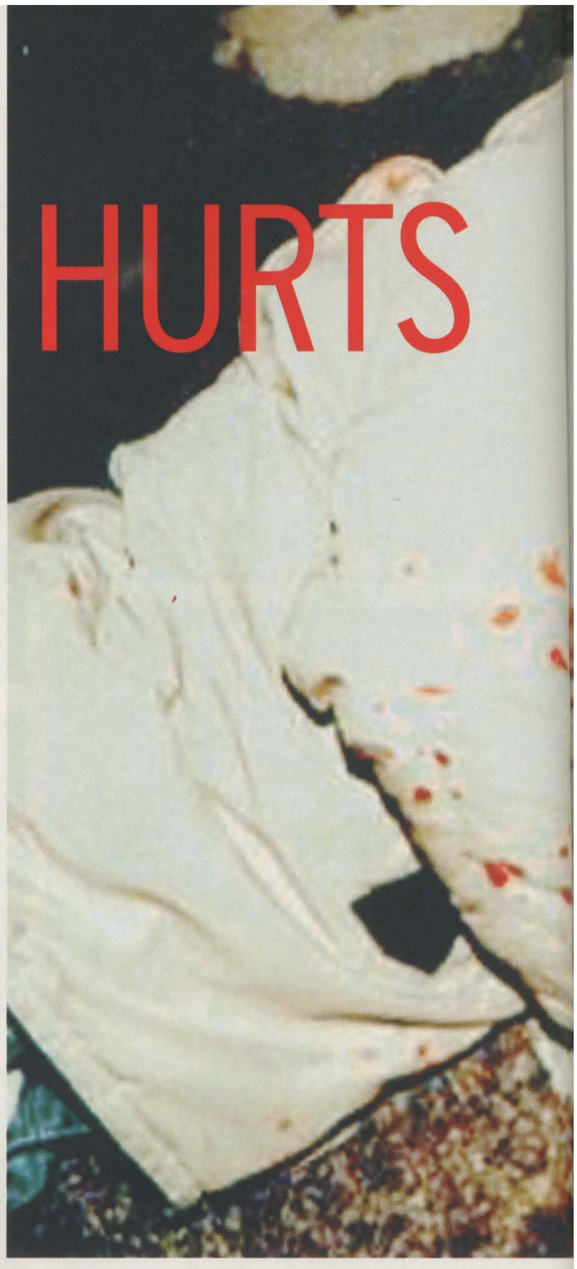
As we had already discovered, in Russia vodka is a way of life. It comes in half-litre bottles with non-resealable caps (once opened, you're expected to finish the bottle). Not downing your vodka in one is considered an insult in polite or other company, and as a couple of bold adventurers, scoring it off the locals was never a problem. Downing mugs of the stuff may not have been the most sensible way to start the day, but when you've been in Siberia long enough you slip into it.

Towards the end of our journey, we met a group of blokes at the side of the track with a motorbike. The vodka soon appeared, but there was no glass. Instead, they unscrewed the indicator cover and filled that with vodka, passing it around until all the booze had run out.

Our heads were still reeling by the time we reached Vladivostok. The scale of our journey is still hard to comprehend, but the satisfaction of crossing the world's largest country by sheer bike, vodka and will-power made every hardship we had endured seem worthwhile. I'm just staying off the Smirnoff.



EVERYBODY HURTS



As far as Hollywood's concerned, Bruce, Arnie and Sly can get run over by tanks, fall out of planes and get liberally sprayed with bullets and still feel no pain. But what really happens if you are shot, stabbed or strangled? TONY THOMPSON **has the answers**

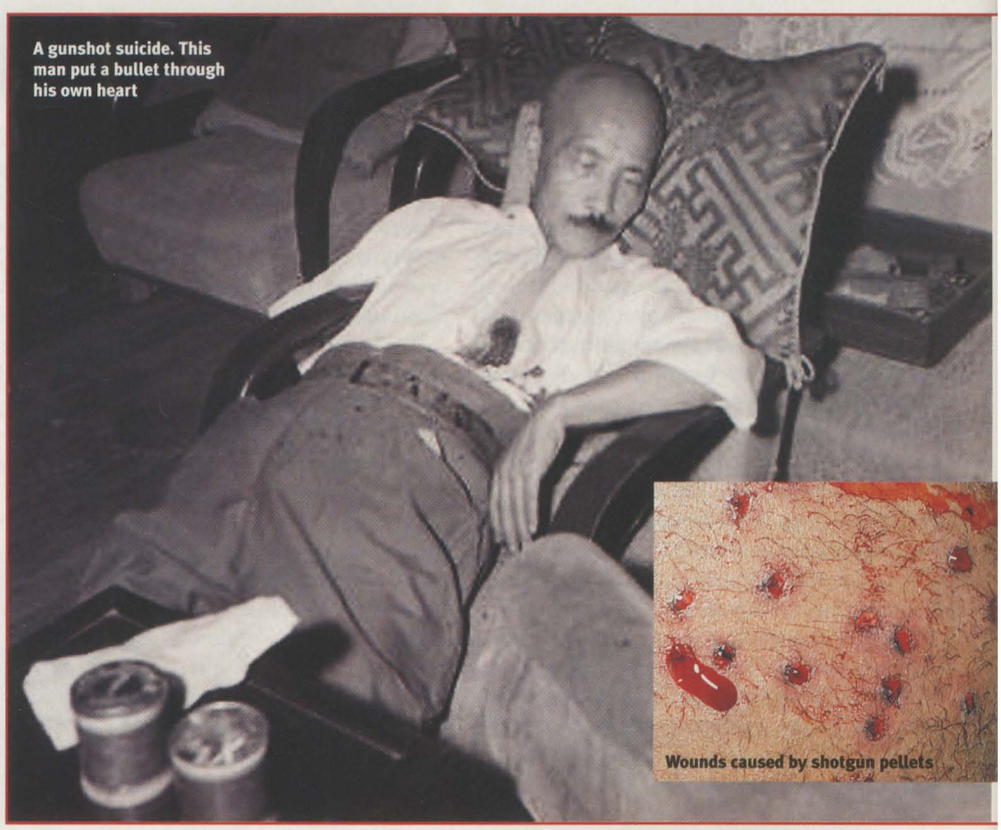
ON 12 MARCH 1994 police constables Jim Seymour and Simon Carrol were on a routine patrol in Brixton, south London, when they saw two men on a motorbike behaving suspiciously. As they approached to investigate, the pillion passenger produced a handgun and opened fire on both officers, hitting PC Seymour in the chest and PC Carrol in the leg.

PC Jim Seymour recovering from a handgun attack. The bullet went straight through him

If this had been a scene from a Hollywood movie, Seymour would have been killed instantly, the force of the bullet throwing him through the nearest plate-glass window. Carrol, on the other hand, would have ripped off his belt to make a tourniquet, gritted his teeth and pursued his attackers. It would only be after he had caught and incapacitated them single-handedly that he would remember his wound and his (black, fat or possibly both) police captain would say something like: "You'd better get down the hospital and get that looked at."

But when it comes to its depiction of wounds and injuries, Hollywood has a lot to answer for. The strange but true reality of the Brixton shooting was that the bullet which hit PC Seymour missed all his major organs and passed right through his body. He was discharged from hospital after just three days. The bullet which hit PC Carrol, on the other hand, smashed into his thigh, sending hundreds of tiny splinters of bone through his leg and almost severing his main artery. He spent three weeks in a 'stable but serious' condition, another four months convalescing and has still not been able to return to work.

Injury and pain are funny things. What you expect to feel in a particular situation isn't necessarily the kind of pain that kind of injury will cause. So here's a list of Britain's favourite forms of GBH and murder, as described by people who have been on the receiving end.



A gunshot suicide. This man put a bullet through his own heart

Wounds caused by shotgun pellets

Blunt Instrument

70 murders in 1996

Sensation: Victims of the most severe beatings around the head usually lose all memory of the event and therefore find it difficult to describe. For those who end up being hit elsewhere, the sensation of feeling a bone break usually leads to immediate shock.
Advantages: Widely available.
Disadvantages: A single blow to the head is unlikely to kill or even render someone unconscious, and specific weapons are easily detected and identified.
Types: Everything from chair-legs to stones, golf clubs, candle sticks and ashtrays have been used.

Severe bruising caused by a sustained attack

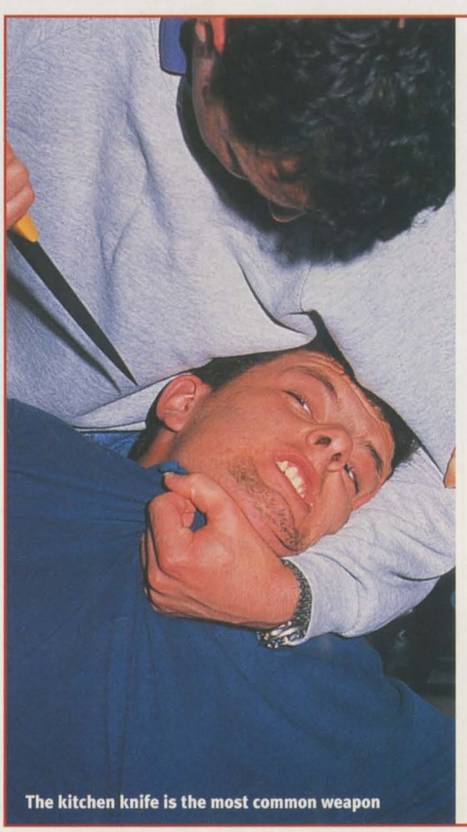
Shooting

48 murders in 1996

Sensation: A large number of people appear to get shot and not realise it, or claim to feel no pain. The key seems to be just how much of a surprise the shooting actually is.

Jay Johnson, a Belfast joyrider, knew in advance that he was going to be kneecapped. "I was taken down an alley and told to lie face-down on the ground. I knew what was coming. I heard the thud of the gun and then it felt like someone had put a red-hot poker into the back of my knee. Then it all went numb. Then I had to wait for the other leg. But it wasn't the same. I heard the gun go off but my leg jerked up and I felt it all mess up inside. The bullet had hit the bone and shattered it. It felt like it had been torn to ribbons. I passed out."

Shock can often help alleviate pain. When the writer Auberon Waugh accidentally shot himself with a machine-gun, hitting himself four times in the chest, he reported no pain at all for the first half-hour, and then 'only a dull ache' afterwards.
Advantages: Highly effective, if the gun is properly aimed.
Disadvantages: Surprisingly ineffective, if the gun is improperly aimed.
Types: Shotguns, pistols and rifles have all been used in recent British murders.



The kitchen knife is the most common weapon

PA NEWS, SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY, AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

Sharp Instruments

202 murders in 1996

Sensation: Although the term 'stabbing pain' is widely used, the reality of being stabbed actually feels much more like being hit, very hard, over and over again in the same place.

Mark Edwards was just 15 years old when he was stabbed in a Birmingham supermarket in 1995. "It felt like a really hard punch in the back," he said. "It was only when I felt the blood coming down that I knew it was something else. It didn't feel anything like how I expected being stabbed to feel."
Advantages: Killers rarely have to look far for a weapon. Most stabbings are not done with 'combat' knives but with kitchen ones. Effective if used properly.
Disadvantages: It's relatively easy to identify the specific weapon involved, making the boys in blue's lives easier and denial harder.
Types: The most common sharp instrument used in attacks is the knife, but screwdrivers, scissors, knitting needles, chisels, ice-picks, pitchforks and even electric drills have all been used in recent murders.

Stab wound to the chest

In severe cases of burning such as this, the black areas are known as eschar

"He was on top of me with his hands around my neck. I couldn't breathe. Slowly everything started to go black and I lost my strength. I thought I was going to die."

Aftermath of the Kings Cross fire

Strangulation

77 murders in 1996

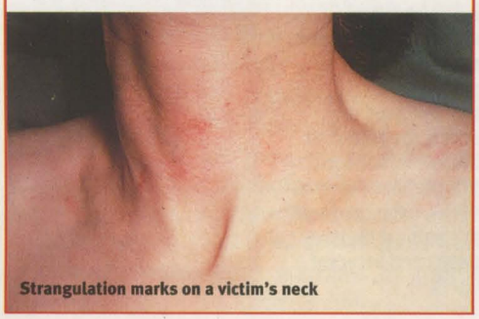
Sensation: If you are being strangled properly (i.e. if the air to your lungs is being cut off), the sensation is not so much one of physical pain as you slowly slip into unconsciousness, but one of increasing panic and terror. Your pulse rate and blood pressure rise as you struggle for breath, the face becomes blue (cyanosis) and the eyes begin to bulge. The hyoid bone, just above the Adam's apple, will break. Convulsions often occur and breathing becomes shallow as you pass out.

Graham Lloyd survived a strangling attack in 1996. "He was on top of me with his hands around my neck. I couldn't breathe. Slowly everything started going black and I lost my strength. He kept doing it and I passed out, probably only for a few seconds but it seemed like a lot longer. I thought I was going to die. When I came to he had gone." Graham's case highlights the main problem of strangulation – knowing when the victim is actually dead, rather than unconscious. Death can take up to five minutes.

Advantages: The killer always has his weapon close to hand.

Disadvantages: The victim has time to fight back.

Types: Hands, ropes, scarves, belts, ties.



Strangulation marks on a victim's neck

Third degree burns. The scoring of the wound relieves internal pressure

Burning

27 murders in 1996

Sensation: For a young healthy person, burning which destroys more than 70 per cent of the skin will be fatal. As the victim increases in age, this proportion can fall to as low as 30 per cent.

Mariella Santello, a survivor of the King's Cross fire in 1987, said, "I turned around to see if Marco [her boyfriend who perished in the blaze] had followed me but I couldn't open my eyes. I tried to shout his name but couldn't even open my mouth." The reason was that her face had literally melted. While first-degree burns (like sunburn) hurt like hell and second-degree burns (like a major scalding) are even more painful, full third-degree burns where the entire thickness of the skin is damaged leave little or no sensation, because of the effect of extreme heat on the nerve endings. As they begin to regrow, however, the pain is extreme. Skin grafts are, apparently, agony.

Advantages: Often difficult to detect foul play because the evidence is usually destroyed by the fire itself.

Disadvantages: Difficult to burn a body completely.

Types: Petrol or lighter fuel and matches, stuffing lighted newspaper through doors. B

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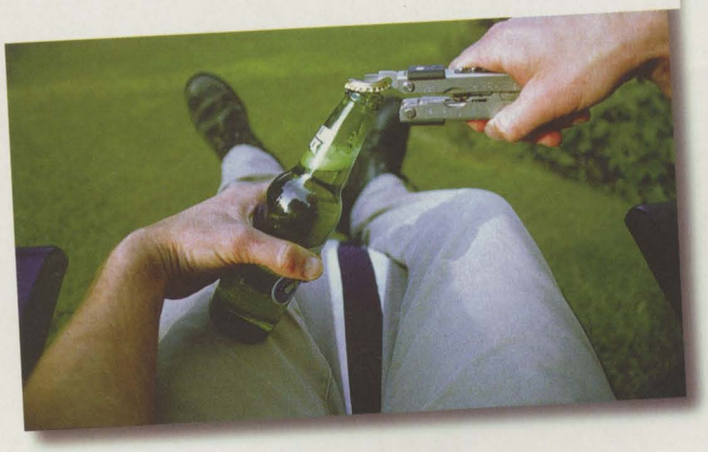

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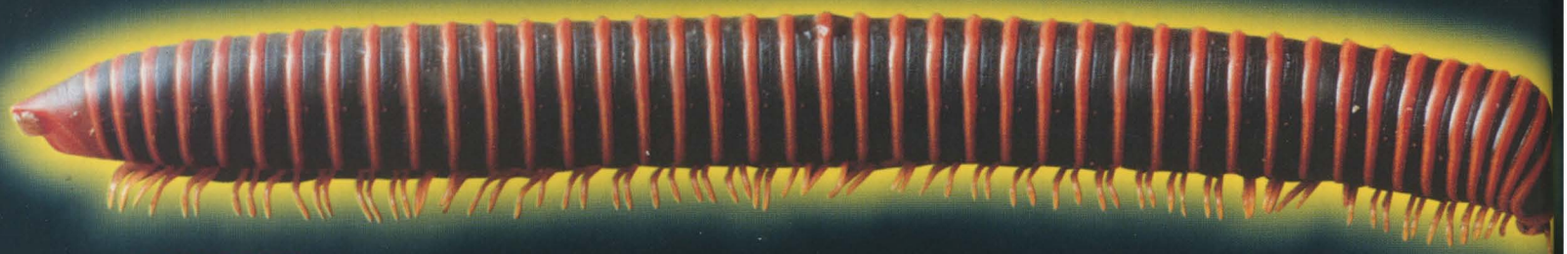


MILLIPEDE

If insects with lots of legs send you into convulsions, skip this bit: millipedes can be up to eight inches long and have 800 legs. Natural scavengers, they've evolved to burrow through soil and leaf mould, and having lots of legs is the best way to do this. They're basically plant-eaters, and have developed several natural defences, ranging from rolling into a tight ball, to exuding corrosive or unpleasant fluids to ward off predators.

GOLIATH SPIDER

Native to South America, particularly Brazil and Venezuela, the Goliath spider is a carnivore which can grow up to 11 inches across. Even smaller ones, with leg-spans of nine inches or so, weigh over half a pound and can live for several years. For something so large, they're surprisingly fast-moving.

In the wild, this sub-species of tarantula will eat small birds, other insects, rodents and lizards. In captivity – and they're a great favourite with collectors – steak or off-cuts from the butcher will keep them happy. Although their bite is extremely painful, it's not actually dangerous to humans.

The females can lay up to 3,000 eggs at a time, each about the size of a pea. When the young hatch, they're already larger than any normal-sized spider.

ROD FLEMING, PLANET EARTH PICTURES

monster BUGS

If a spider in the sink or a worm in your apple sends you into a fit, then how about a spider as big as a basin, and millipedes as long as a banana? JAMES WALLIS **grabs his insect repellent**

PRAYING MANTIS

Best known for being as creepy as hell, the praying mantis can grow up to six inches long and will eat pretty much anything it can get its forelegs on, from other insects up to frogs, lizards, mice and small birds.

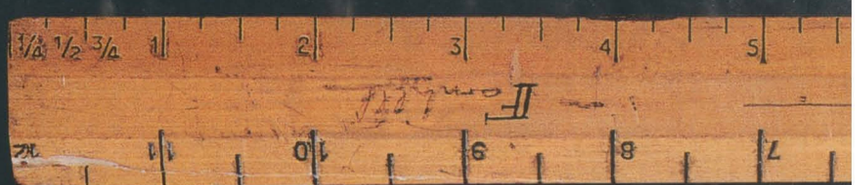
Many species of mantis have developed amazing natural camouflage to disguise themselves from predators, looking like flowers, bark, grasses or – in the case of the one pictured here – dead leaves. They will also stand motionless for long periods of time, making them even harder to spot.

Female mantises are almost always larger than the males. During mating, she'll often bite off the male's head and eat it; or sometimes she'll save it for a post-shag snack. When the eggs hatch, the main food for the young nymph mantises is their brothers and sisters. This is survival of the fittest in its rawest form.

We haven't actually shown the biggest insect in the world, because it's so large that we couldn't fit it on the page. It's the Borneo-born stick-insect *Pharnacia kirbyi*. One specimen in the Natural History Museum in London has a body 32.8cms long. With legs, it's 54.6cms. Open this magazine as wide as it'll go, then add 10cms. Big bug.

THEY MAY NOT be as big as the monsters from *Starship Troopers*, but some creepy-crawlies can grow big enough to give even the hardest of people the screaming ad-dabs. However, Hollywood's horror bugs are unlikely to ever evolve. Despite the amazing size of some of the creatures here, insects and arachnids seem to be unable to grow beyond certain dimensions. There's many theories as to why: maybe it's because they've never developed lungs, and therefore can't get the oxygen they'd need to power a bigger body; or perhaps it's because bugs' nervous systems don't operate fast enough to control anything larger.

It wasn't always that way. Back at the dawn of time, when there was more oxygen in the atmosphere, the early insects and arachnids grew much larger. Fossils of dragon-flies with two-foot wingspans and bodies as thick as a child's wrist are common. But whatever it was that caused them to shrink, frankly we're glad. Spiders a foot across are quite big enough for us, thank you.



***actual size!**

GOLIATH BEETLE

Not the biggest bug around but undeniably the heaviest, the Goliath Beetles of equatorial Africa may only reach 13cms in length, but they weigh up to 100g – almost quarter of a pound. And they can fly, making a sound like an irritable lawnmower as they go.

They're members of the Scarab family, boasting impressive relatives like the Rhinoceros Beetle and the Unicorn Beetle. Despite their ferocious appearance, Goliath Beetles actually live mostly on tree sap and nectar. In Zaire, they're used in a local delicacy, imaginatively named Goliath Beetle soup. Apparently they taste like crispy bacon. When they're not eating them, local children attach strings to these giants of the bug world and let them fly around on a leash, like living aircraft.

MADAGASCAN HISSING COCKROACH

In terms of size, the Madagascan Hissing Cockroach doesn't really rate – they don't get much bigger than 8cms long – but as the closest living relatives of the pre-dinosaur cockroaches which lived about 320 million years ago, they deserve some attention. There's something about roaches that makes people go, "Eurgh!"

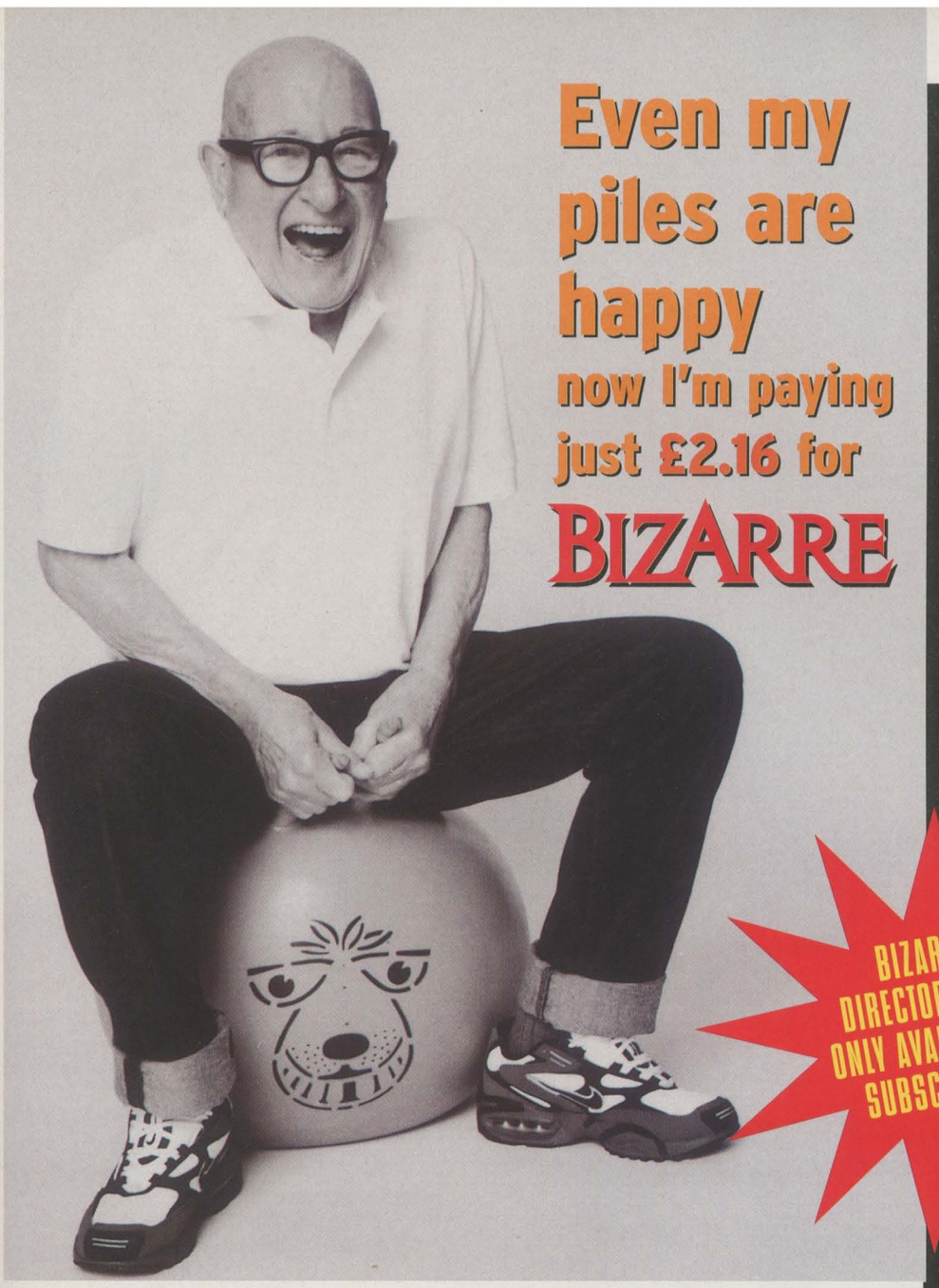
Hissing cockroaches are a bit dopey. They have no wings and tend to be nocturnal. They do actually hiss, through modified breathing spiracles, and they use the sound as a form of communication, which can mean anything from "Back off" to "Fancy a shag?" Males also engage in duels: ramming each other with the horns on their thorax. They're popular pets, and can live for six years. But if you're tempted, be warned that Madagascan roaches do one thing the same as their smaller cousins: they breed. Prolifically.

GIANT SCORPION

Be very, very grateful that the largest scorpion around today, the South African Rock Scorpion, doesn't get much bigger than 21cms; and the largest scorpion on record – a *Heterometrus swannerdami* found in India – was 29.2cms long. Scorpions, which are related to spiders, are one of the most ancient arthropods on earth, and 400 million years ago they were growing up to a metre long. These days there are over 1,000 different known species. They're found all over the world and they're all poisonous, but only 20 types are potentially fatal to humans.

The one in the picture isn't a Rock Scorpion, it's an Emperor Scorpion (*Padninus imperator*) from central Africa. While not the largest, it shares the honour of being the heaviest with the *Heterometrus* ones mentioned above. Emperor scorpions are favoured as pets, partly because they can live up to eight years.

PLANET EARTH PICTURES



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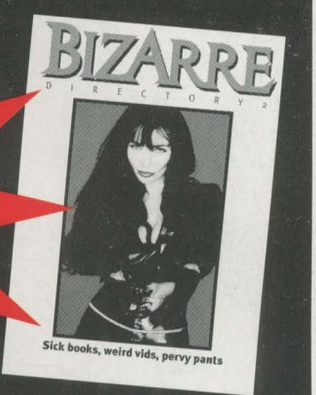

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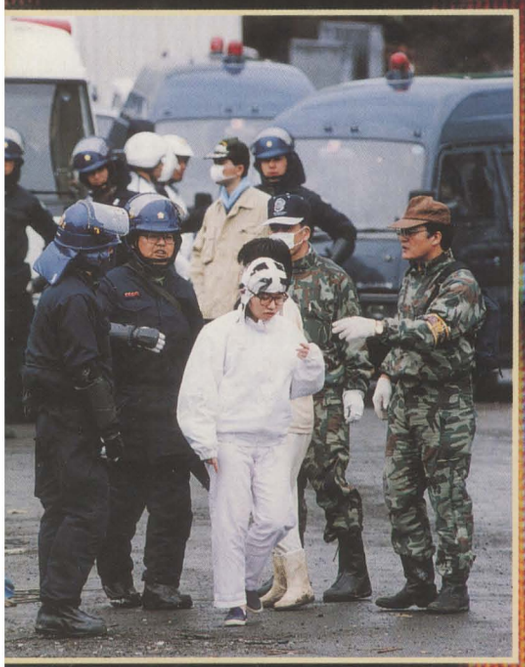


Skoptzies

THE SKOPTZIES CALLED themselves White Doves . The less charitable referred to them as madmen . The cult, which emerged in the mid-1700s, believed that the only way to enter the kingdom of heaven was to lop off their genitals, or, if female, mutilate their breasts and perform self-circumcision. They based this on New Testament passages from Matthew (19:12): And there are eunuchs which have made themselves for the kingdom of heaven s sake , and from Luke (23:29): Blessed are the barren . In spite of this, the cult survived from the days of Catherine the Great until the 1930s, when 500 Skoptzies were found to be still practising in Romania.

Russia in the 1700s was full of religious mystics, and even the royal court wasn t immune. The Skoptzies founder, Kondrati Sseliwanow, formerly a flagellant, was shipped off by the authorities to a Siberian salt mine. But not before he had infected some notable converts. Peter III, the future Czar of Russia was one. He was also bumbling, insane and shortly to be offed by his formidable wife Catherine the Great, who had him strangled in 1762. However, the Skoptzies believed that Peter III was not really assassinated; that a guard took his place, and that Peter escaped to fulfil his true destiny — preaching the Skoptzy faith and demanding that converts go through the trial by fire of castration.

The nature of the Skoptzy rituals was a very well-kept secret. The anthropologist Eug ne Pittard claimed that the Skoptzy men would emasculate themselves at the age of 14, by placing their genitals on a tree trunk and lopping them off with an axe.

But, noting the neatness of the scars, other anthropologists suspected a trained priest would perform the operation. Those considered the purest amongst the Skoptzies were known as bearers of the Imperial Seal . These righteous men had their penis, testicles and scrotums removed, leaving only a crinkly scar and a pouty urethra hole, usually done by the age of five. Emasculated men developed over-long arms and a feminine pubic region.

Skoptzy women suffered varying degrees of mutilation. Most common was having the clitoris, labia and nipples cut off, and the breasts deeply scarred.

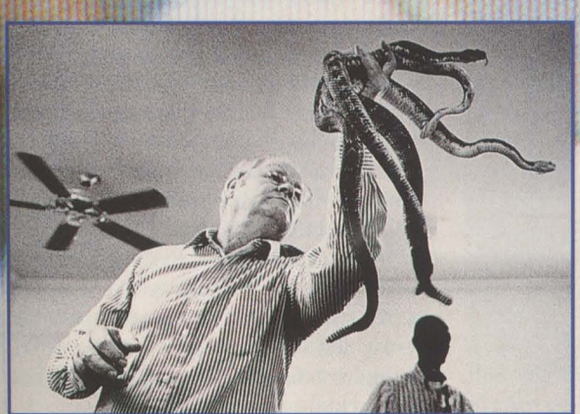
What no one can explain is how the cult survived for so long. Perhaps the Skoptzies won converts who had children, perhaps they staved off castration until after fatherhood. Whatever, they certainly make modern body-modifiers look a little tame.

Top left: members of the Aum Shinrikyo cult arrested after the Tokyo subway gas attack in 1995 Left: Skoptzies Main pic: David "I am Jesus!" Koresh

losing my religion

From Jim Jones' Kool-Aid acid test to David Koresh's Waco bonfire, cults get nothing but a bad name. But these modern would-be messiahs have nothing on some of the cults that have been flourishing around the globe for the last thousand years. Jesus died for somebody's sins, but not HARRY ANGEL's

A feast of snakes: handlers in the Appalachians



Snake Handlers

I HANDLE SERPENTS because it s in the Bible, says preacher Dewey Chafin. And I drink poison like strychnine because the Bible says it won t hurt me. Now, either every word in the Bible is right or it s wrong.

Chafin is one of an estimated 100 members of the snake-handling sect, which has been banned across America in every state except West Virginia. Founded in 1909 by George Went Hensley, this devout reptile-fondling cult is based on Mark 16:17-18, which states: And these signs shall follow them that believe They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.

Though there have been 77 recorded deaths from over-enthusiastic handlers since the 1920s, the cult continues to thrive among the subsistence farmers of the Appalachians. Simple and uneducated, these families are drawn to miraculous ceremonies. Snake-handling preachers are not part of any global denomination or governing body and do not recognise earthly authority. Therefore their preachers rise or are called upon to their vocations. In Jolo, West Virginia, Dewey Chafin s flock gather on a Saturday night in a clapboard chapel in a dirt-poor mining

town. They dance and clap to Chafin s electric guitar picking, and weep and wail.

I ve got the joy! the preacher shouts. Yeah, Lord! He pulls four rattlesnakes from the box. Lord have mercy! cry the faithful, as the poisonous snakes writhe along Dewey s arms. The creatures are then handed around the hall from person to person, while Chafin takes a lengthy swig from a jar he claims contains water and strychnine and passes it along to the rest of the congregation. Finally, the worshippers set a kerosene-drenched cloth alight and hold their hands over the flames.

Chafin says he has been bitten 106 times, and has plenty of scars to prove it. There have been times when I thought I might die, he admits. Once I was laid up for 15 days. But I ve always pulled through and I ve never had medical treatment. His sister, Columbia, was killed by a snakebite in 1961. It was her time, he says, simply. ►

What a load of cults

Are you:

- Living in a small, isolated community, surrounded by an impressive armoury of guns and ammo?
- Controlled by a charismatic male leader who is not an ordained priest, but who dictates your physical, emotional and sexual needs?
- Afraid of the outside world?
- Waiting for space aliens to come and rescue you?

Then you could be part of a bizarre religious cult. Like these six sects below:

BRANCH DAVIDIANS

"If the Bible is true, then I am Christ," proclaimed David Koresh before he and his 82 followers went out in a blaze of ignominy at the 1993 Waco siege. Koresh was surprisingly adept at recruiting Brits, 32 of which perished with him when the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms hastened his trip to kingdom come.

CHILDREN OF GOD

Now somewhat eerily known as The Family, this 9,000-strong cult hit the headlines with their 'Hookers For Christ' campaign in the 1970s and 1980s, in which women members seduced potential converts and had their children. Founded by 'original hippy' David Berg in the 1960s, the cult spread from America to Europe, India and Australasia in a frenzy of wife-swapping and pornography. Its image has toned down following Berg's death in 1994.

BAGHWAN RAJNEESH

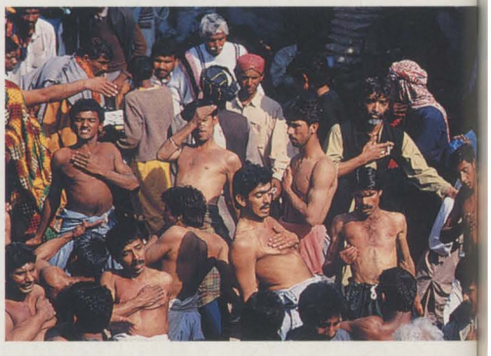
To many, the world's greatest spiritual con-man, Baghwan Rajneesh played the free love card to amass a fortune around his hippy Osho cult. Advocating a type of meditation that involved sex and making loud noises, Baghwan (whose name means 'master of the vagina') opened his first centre in Poona, India in 1974 but soon found a more lucrative base in Oregon. He died in 1990, allegedly of Aids.

Above: whirling dervishes spin their Sufi stuff Right: Sufis cultivate a female appearance Below right: the disciples of Lal Shabaz Qalandar

"She'd handled snakes quite a while, and that was the first time she'd been bitten. We asked if she wanted us to take her to a doctor, but she said no. She wanted God to do what he wanted with her."

For survivors of rattler bites – and Chafin's 72-year-old mother has been there 17 times herself too – it might just be their faith that enables them to pull through. According to Dr Mary Lee Daugherty of the Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center, "some doctors feel the human body may be able to sustain higher doses of venom when it is in a state of religious ecstasy. Also, when the snake handlers are bitten, they are never left alone. There are always members of the church praying and 'laying hands' on them. I think in many cases, this gets them through it."

Chafin, however, relishes death by snakebite: "I don't think there could be a better way to go," he says.



Sufis

EVERY YEAR ON the anniversary of the death of Saint Lal Shabaz Qalandar, week-long celebrations in Pakistan's Sind region give rise to phenomenal collective hysteria. Tens of thousands of pilgrims come to Sehwand, a sanctuary of holy tombs. When these 'Urs' celebrations take place, priests, mystics and dervishes arrive from all over the Muslim world and in-fighting between rival factions ceases. No one would dare harm another disciple of Lal Shahbaz, the Red Eagle.

Men in red robes known as 'malangs' spin like tops as they dance on the tombs of saints. They dance until driven into a trance by drumbeats, chanting and the smell of incense and hashish. They are the Sufi, commonly known as 'whirling dervishes'.

Sufism appeared around 9AD, and preaches a personal search to become one with God. In past times, Sufis ignored the rules of society but were respected for the supernatural powers they were said to possess. They formed brotherhoods led by spiritual leaders and were either tolerated or proscribed – Sufism was often in conflict with orthodox Muslim ideas.

Things came to a head during the 13th century, when the massive conversion to Islam began in the former Pakistan. Lal Shabaz Qalandar (Royal Red Eagle) rose to power in the Multan region, and, it is said, by will-power alone he brought about the destruction of a rich lord who was persecuting his people for their religion. He has been an idol ever since.

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Some go the whole way and get nailed to crosses

Banners in the symbolic red and white colours of the saint are raised all over Sehwand. Drumbeats herald the arrival of the Shiites, who, during the 'matam' ritual beat their chests with extreme violence whilst screaming the name of Hussaïn, Qalandar's descendent. Some flog themselves until they bleed, and then run into the Royal Red Eagle's mausoleum, knocking down anything that stands in their way. The streets are lined with beggars, lepers and those suffering from elephantiasis (massive swelling of the body's extremities, usually legs or testicles).

Tribute to the Sufi saint reaches its climax as night falls. At 6.30 drums are beaten in the sanctuary courtyard and the dancing dervishes whirl faster and faster. Women enter the dance, swaying until they fall into a faint. The dervishes cultivate a feminine appearance, growing long hair and wearing necklaces and rings: their way of seeking a mystic union with a masculine God. The aim of the frenzied dances is to reach the state of 'Lahut Lamakan' (no me, no space), a trance of ecstasy through which union with the divine occurs.

"If human beings knew their own inner secrets, never would they look elsewhere for seeking happiness, peace and inner light," the Sufis say. "Know thyself, know thy Lord!"

Flagellants

ON MAUNDY THURSDAY, in the Philippine provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga and Pangasinan, the annual commemoration of Christ's Last Supper provokes a startling ritual. This is the day that the procession of flagellants begins.

The Christ of the Philippines is a suffering son of God; beaten, scourged and defeated, and the 'folk Catholicism' of the island embraces the passion and death, rather than the resurrection of Jesus. Their ritual re-enactment begins with a line of men carrying heavy crosses and wearing crowns of thorns, who will beat themselves in imitation of Christ's scourging at the pillar. Some go the whole way and, on Good Friday, have themselves nailed to crosses.

Anthropologists have noted that the Filipinos do not carry out this ritual as a form of repentance – the men do not even go to confession as preparation. It is, instead, a shared experience of suffering.

The roots of this tradition lie in Medieval Europe. Religious self-flagellation originated in the 11th century amongst Italian monastic reformers. With the rise of Franciscan and Dominican orders greater emphasis was placed on penance, and the 'discipline' of self-scourging spread rapidly through Europe until it became not only a regular feature of monastic life but the most common form of showing your repentance for ordinary Catholics, practised in public by an estimated 10,000 converts. Banned by the Vatican in 1261, the cult moved into Germany to spread their message: God was angry with humanity.

The Black Death (1347-1349) stirred up a revival of the movement. Flagellants believed the Plague to be the wrath of God; a sign that Judgement Day was imminent. Led by renegade priests they formed processions that marched from town to town, singing hymns and whipping themselves raw. The flagellants wore a uniform similar to the crusaders' surcoats – a white robe with red crosses on the front and back.

Their practices were then transferred to the Western Hemisphere, where the tradition was continued in New Mexico and Colorado by the Penitentes (*La Fraternidad Piadosa de Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno*) well into the 20th century. These flagellants still continue their secret humiliation rituals, although the days of their public processions, scourgings and crucifixions ended in 1890, when the church outlawed such practices. Remnants of the cult in Taos, Carmel and San Mateo still carry out their lashings, bindings and self-mutilations out of the public eye. B

Medieval flagellants moved from town to town, scourging themselves and winning new converts

ORDER OF THE SOLAR TEMPLE

Joseph Di Mambro convinced his flock that he was a reincarnation of a Knight Templar and that he would lead them, through death, to the planet Sirius. He also claimed his daughter Emanuelle was a 'cosmic child' and an immaculate conception. When a couple in the cult named their son Emmanuel, Di Mambro said the boy was the Antichrist and had him ceremonially murdered. But before he could be apprehended, he and 53 cult members committed suicide in a Swiss Chateau in October 1994.

GEORGE KING

In 1954, George King was visited by a yogic apparition who told him he had been chosen by the Hidden Masters to become the 'Voice of the Interplanetary Parliament'; the sole spokesman for the people of earth in a galaxy-wide government. He would be helped in his quest by the Hidden Masters themselves who would visit him on earth in their flying saucers.

He wasted no time in setting up the Aetherius Society, and revealing his true name to be Sir George King, OSP, PhD, ThD, DD, Metropolitan Archbishop of the Aetherius Churches, Prince Grand Master of the Mystical Order of St Peter, HRH Prince De George King De Santori, and Founder President of the Aetherius Society.

Previous to his sudden revelation, King had been a humble London cabbie.

AUM SHINRIKYO:

Formed in Japan in 1987, predicting the end of the world ten years later, Aum was founded by Hitler-fancier Shoko Ashara, the man behind the infamous Tokyo subway gas attack in March 1995, which brought about his downfall. Aum had a staggering 10,000 members in a strict hierarchy of 13 class-based levels. Members were forced to wear coloured uniforms according to their status. Some also had their eyebrows dyed bright green and were told to wear battery-powered headgear which imitated their leader's brainwaves. On his arrest, police apparently discovered 22lb of gold and £5 million in cash at Asahara's office.

The Vince Ray Experience

Not a night club act, but a range of pervy pottery and glassware

'Don't be a kinky square, get hip!' screams the advertising. "It's the style that makes them acceptable," designer Vince Ray tells us. Over a year ago the cult artist set up a two man/two slave company to promote his unique 1950s-influenced fetish designs and has been making great strides ever since.

BIZARRE has teamed up with The Vince Ray Experience to bring you a host of cute'n'sexy products made to the highest standards. The cost of all items is less than the R.R.P. and they'll be delivered securely packaged. Just fill in the form, send us your money and you too can be experienced...

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Mistress pint mug **£9.00**
Master pint mug **£9.00**

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set of 2
(2 of devil design)
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set of 6
(set of all designs)
£22.00

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Martini glasses

set of 4 (2 of each design)
Code 061 **£29.00**

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Ashtray

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Tattoo kit

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All Vince Ray pottery is made from pristine bone china, and all their glassware is top quality lead crystal

film, gadgets, net, books, vids and...

Egg cups

set of 2
(Master/Mistress)
£8.00

set of 6
(set of all designs)
£22.00

Save £8!

Tea set

Teapot, sugar bowl & milk jug
£39.00

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Cards

Set of 6
£8.50

Save £3.50!

Coffee mugs

£7.50

Save £1.50!

WHITE BACKGROUND

PLEASE SEND ME THE FOLLOWING VINCE RAY ITEMS

Item	Code	RRP	UK Price	US Price	Overseas	Quantity	Value
Egg cups 2 (Master/Mistress)	059	~~£10.00~~	£8.00	$18.00	£9.00		
Egg cups 6 (set of all designs)	060	~~£30.00~~	£22.00	$48.00	£24.00		
Martini glasses 4 (2 of each design)	061	~~£36.00~~	£29.00	$64.00	£32.00		
Ashtray	062	~~£12.00~~	£10.50	$25.00	£12.50		
Tea Set (teapot, sugar bowl. milk jug)	063	~~£49.00~~	£39.00	$86.00	£43.00		
Tattoo kit	064	~~£13.00~~	£11.00	$24.00	£12.00		
Shot glasses 2 (2 of devil design)	065	~~£10.00~~	£9.00	$21.00	£10.50		
Shot glasses 6 (set of all designs)	066	~~£25.00~~	£22.00	$51.00	£25.50		
Master pint mug	067	~~£10.00~~	£9.00	$21.00	£10.50		
Mistress pint mug	068	~~£10.00~~	£9.00	$21.00	£10.50		
Coffee mug Style A							
Design VR#1	069	~~£9.00~~	£7.50	$18.00	£9.00		
Design VR#2	070	~~£9.00~~	£7.50	$18.00	£9.00		
Design VR#3	071	~~£9.00~~	£7.50	$18.00	£9.00		
Design VR#15	072	~~£9.00~~	£7.50	$18.00	£9.00		
Design VR#26	073	~~£9.00~~	£7.50	$18.00	£9.00		
Design VR#27	074	~~£9.00~~	£7.50	$18.00	£9.00		
Coffee mug Style B							
Design VR#1	075	~~£9.00~~	£7.50	$18.00	£9.00		
Design VR#2	076	~~£9.00~~	£7.50	$18.00	£9.00		
Design VR#3	077	~~£9.00~~	£7.50	$18.00	£9.00		
Design VR#15	078	~~£9.00~~	£7.50	$18.00	£9.00		
Design VR#26	079	~~£9.00~~	£7.50	$18.00	£9.00		
Design VR#27	080	~~£9.00~~	£7.50	$18.00	£9.00		
T - shirt (Bitch)	081	~~£15.00~~	£11.00	$25.00	£12.50		
T - shirt (Slave)	082	~~£15.00~~	£11.00	$25.00	£12.50		
Greeting cards set of 6	083	~~£12.00~~	£8.50	$19.00	£9.50		
					Postage and Packing is free	**TOTAL**	

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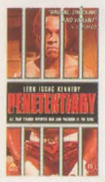
VIDEO CENTRAL

BOUND

Corky meets Violet. One's an ex-con, the other a Mafia money-launderer's moll. They're both gorgeous lesbians. They fall in love, shag, and together hatch a plan to steal $2million dollars of blood-stained Mob money from Violet's mentalist boyfriend Cesar. Will their labyrinthine scam work? Will there be bloody murder and black frilly underwear? Will Tom Jones sing the end-song of this visually striking, witty black comedy? One thing's for sure, you'll never mend a U-bend in the same way again.
20th Century Fox/Pathé, £12.99



PENITENTIARY

Woah. They really don't make them like this anymore – Blaxploitation in all its full-tilt, get-back boogie glory. The enigmatically-named Too Sweet (Leon Kennedy) is sent to prison for an accidental murder defending a hooker. And of course he ends up in the sort of institution where unspeakable violence and forced sodomy are the order of the day. There's lots of sweaty blokes shouting at each other, plenty of random brutality, and a whole heap of weird "jive" lingo. It's funnier than *Scum* and more grimly disturbing than *Prisoner*.
M.I.A. Video, £12.99

SWINGERS

Cool shirts, hip dialogue, top tunes, fashion chains, golf, Frank Sinatra and bamboo furniture can only mean that the 1950's are back. Well, they are in this film anyway. It's a tale of men; men hanging-out, men going-out and men striking-out. If you're a bloke and you have any friends or love life at all, this funny but slight film is full of recognisably uneasy home truths. It's the money, baby.
20th Century Fox/Pathé, £12.99

THE LEGEND OF DOLEMITE

Rudy Ray Moore has as good a claim as any to be called the Father of Rap. This hour-long documentary covers pretty much the whole of Moore's career since the 1960s, taking in the early albums, 'party records', the cracking *Dolemite* movies, and his current career in stand-up comedy. It's a mixed bag. The excerpts from *Dolemite* are top-notch stuff, the historical background is always rivetting, and the modern stand-up material... well, it stinks, but you can't have everything. When Moore's wandering the audience, firing out insults like a chain-gun with an attitude problem, he's as funny as hell. When he starts telling jokes, he turns into Roy "Chubby" Brown.
M.I.A. Video, £12.99

THE FUNERAL

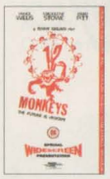
For every *King of New York* that Abel Ferrara makes, you get an inferior *Blackout*. But his films are usually compelling. Strangely then, *The Funeral* is just plain tedious. At the Depression-era funeral of their brother, greasy Vincent Gallo, Christopher Walken and Chris Penn (the unlikeliest family since the Wests) swear revenge on the rival gang that killed him. Then... well, nothing. Instead of a bloodbath of ultra violence and quality swearing, it becomes an elegiac, complex portrait of Italian family life, it's traditions and relationship to the Mafia. Lots of pontificating dialogue, lots of opera but not much action.
20th Century Fox, £12.99

HATED: GG ALLIN & THE MURDER JUNKIES

Since it is legally impossible to libel the dead, I'd like to point out that GG Allin was an attention-seeking tosser whose antics appeared to stem from not having his head kicked in often enough during his childhood. *Hated* shows him in full flow, banging on and about how hard he is, how on the edge he is, how extreme he is. This is intercut with live footage and home video which, sadly, generally shows just how full of shit he actually was. The video ends with what looks to be Super 8 footage of GG's blackened corpse immediately prior to his funeral. Remember him this way.
Exploited, £12.99

DERANGED

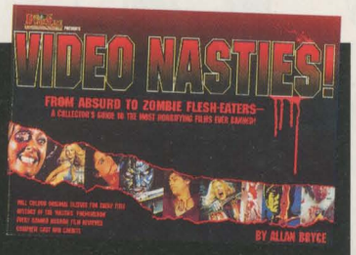
Deranged has a killer rep on the sleaze horror circuit – and it's not hard to see why. This Ed Gein-inspired slab of nastiness sticks a damn sight more closely to the facts of his lifestyle, including an on-screen face flaying. The Gein character here is Ezra Cobb, played by *Home Alone*'s Roberts Blossom. When Cobb's mother dies, leaving the poor soul with nobody for company but the voices in his head, he digs her up. As she decays, he patches up any manky bits with the skin of newly-buried corpses. Eventually, ma starts to get lonely, and Cobb knows he must kill... We have gorehound Michael D. Moore to thank for this widescreen, digitally-enhanced version; he sold his holiday home to pay for the worldwide rights.
Exploited, £12.99



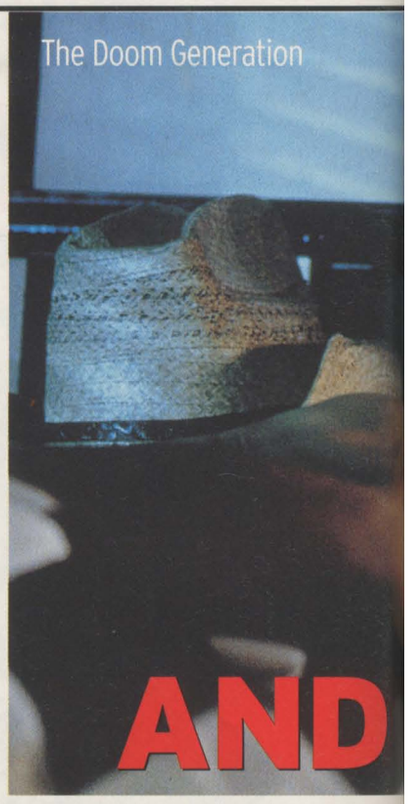
TWELVE MONKEYS

In 1997, five billion people are killed by an unknown virus, and mankind is forced to live underground. Bruce Willis is sent back from this future to stop the Army of the 12 Monkeys, the animal-rights group thought to have released the disease. This film is Terry Gilliam's best. His usual Kafka-esque theme of one man against baffling odds is woven into the sci-fi premise and played against some stunning design and visual set-pieces; the cog-and-steam powered time machine, animals running free in the streets of New York, motifs of madness and Armageddon all make this a superb example of how original mainstream Hollywood can still be.
See page 82 to get this film at a knock-down price

IT'S A WRAP!



Anyone who caught our Art Director's stylish and scary representation of a cover for *Last House on The Left* in our June issue will know that this book fills a big gap. A superb compendium of pull-out, full-size reproductions of original covers for 75 so-called Video Nasties with info on the reverse. Send a lovely cheque for £16.99 (inc p&p) to Stray Cat Publishing Ltd, Po Box 36, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 4YT.

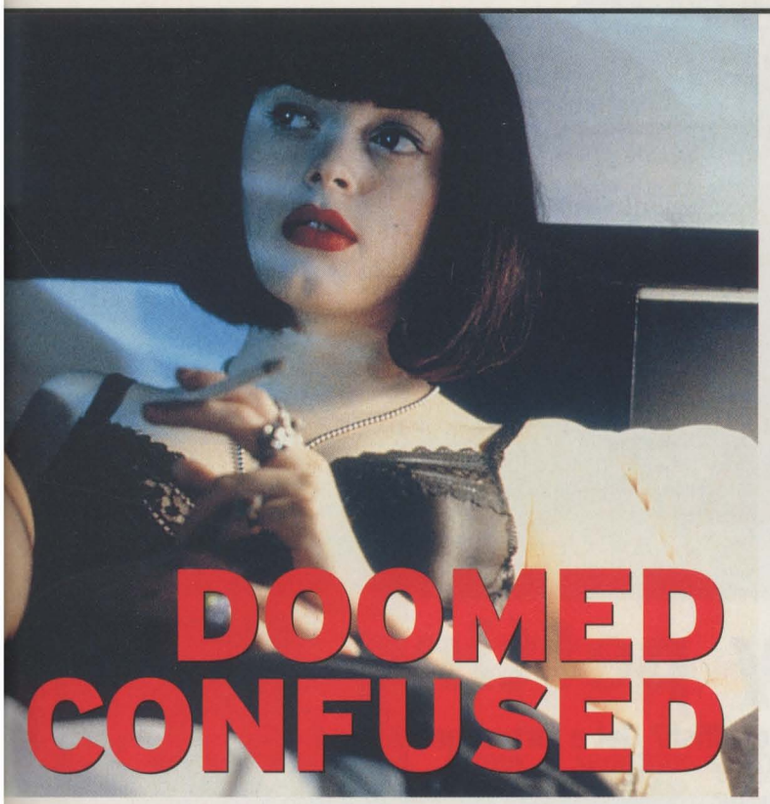


The blood-drenched road

"HELL ON EARTH" is not normally a phrase you'd associate with good cinema. *The Doom Generation*, however, is exactly that, and dear suffering baby Jesus, it rocks – it's stylish, it's funny, it's violent and it all ends up more horribly than you could possibly imagine.

Director Greg Arraki made his name with the post-AIDS road movie *The Living End*, and this is similar territory. Think *Wild At Heart* meets *Natural Born Killers*, with help from Peter Jackson. It's not much like that, but it's as close as you'll get.

When things start off, it's hard not to think you've been here before. Betty Page wannabe Amy Blue (Rose McGowan) and her slacker twat of a boyfriend Jordan White (James Duval) hit the road with spooky geezer Xavier Red (Johnathon Schaech) after – wait for it – a failed heist. But from here on in the film shifts into berserker mode. What follows it a non-stop jamboree of voyeuristic masturbation, messy shotgun accidents, and searing sexual encounters. Every road stop involves



DOOMED CONFUSED

movie that'll haunt your dreams for weeks (promise)

(1) two of the three shagging like weasels on angel dust; (2) somebody mistaking Amy for a past lover and going insane with jealousy; and/or (3) somebody losing a limb to a shotgun blast or being horribly stabbed, usually as a result of (2).

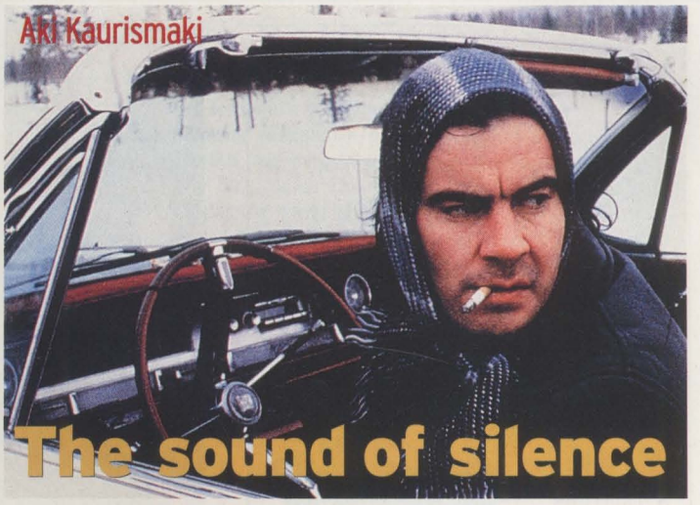
Always present is the unnerving feeling that something, somewhere, is going irreversibly wrong. Like the convenience store clerk who has his head blown clean off because of a misunderstanding about a hot dog. The head refuses to die and turns up later, screaming, in a news bulletin. Whenever the trio buy anything their bill always totals $6.66. There are more fights, more frenzied couplings, some shopping, they run over a dog... Eventually, a difference of opinion with a bunch of thugs – played by industrial muscle marys Skinny Puppy – leads to a great many very, very painful things happening to our three chums. Garden shears, clingfilm and huge religious statues are involved, and not everybody makes it through.

It is probably the least funny thing ever filmed. And then there's that finale, which I'm just not ready to talk about yet.

It's not perfect – there's more than one point where Amy's clothes are the most interesting thing going on, and somebody should tell Schaech that Jack Nicholson is not the only actor to ape – but it's hard not to love it. McGowan's as sexy as hell, Duval makes a convincing Gen X gimboid, and Schaech is very scary indeed.

The soundtrack is suitably cool (if dated – it's three years old, after all), and there are a ton of sick laughs. It's haunting, it's violent, bits of it are even lovely. It looks fantastic, with half the scenes oozing colours like the very worst bad trips (the ones that end up with the Lizard Gods coming to eat your genitals). Definitely worth 90 minutes of your life, if only because you'll still be seeing the end in your nightmares for weeks after.

The Doom Generation *is released on 18 September*



The sound of silence

King of the quiet moment that speaks volumes, Aki Kaurismaki's early films are now out on video

EVEN THOUGH AKI Kaurismaki's films are all relatively short, it must still be a shock for his actors to find so little in his scripts by way of dialogue. A quarter of the way into *The Match Factory Girl* and we've only had four words – "Whore!" and "Take it back". However, this is no lack of communication on the part of the director himself. Kaurismaki is one of the most communicative film-makers around.

Born in 1957, he began his working life as postman and dishwasher before gaining recognition first as a film critic and then as a writer and actor for Mika, his brother. The two brothers have made 34 films since 1981, though only *The Saimaa Gesture*, a documentary from that year, is jointly credited. Their work features the same band of actors over and over again, although whether this is personal preference or a reflection on the small size of the Finnish film industry is anyone's guess.

He works like a DJ, mixing found sounds

Aki's recognition in the UK came hesitantly, firstly with *Hamlet Goes Business* in 1987 and then with the very well-received *Leningrad Cowboys Go America*, featuring the bequiffed band themselves (1994 saw the release of *Leningrad Cowboys Meet Moses*). Since then, several films have been co-financed by Channel Four Films. *Hamlet Goes Business*, an irreverent and yet valid interpretation of Shakespeare, showed Aki's talent for reworking the classics. For all the farce of Hamlet's step-dad wanting to become the king of Rubber Duck Manufacturers, this is a spiteful, brutal *Hamlet*. The sting in the tail is not forced; the triumph of the working man sits comfortably within the thematic subtext. In his most recent success, 1996's *Drifting Clouds*, once again the realities of unemployment are the pulse-beats of his narrative.

Kaurismaki's leading characters are usually lonely people, poor and ordinary. This is not something that needs to be spoken. It's in every camera shot. From Taisto's indifferent acceptance of the suicide of a laid-off work colleague in *Ariel*, to Henri's landlady in *I Hired A Contract Killer*, sat on a bare chair in her empty room, smoking a cigarette. Yet these films can also be downright hilarious. During *I Hired...* we see the hero Henri asking a London cabbie how to find a hitman, then leaving a note on his front door so that the killer will know where to find him when he decides to nip out to the pub for a quick one.

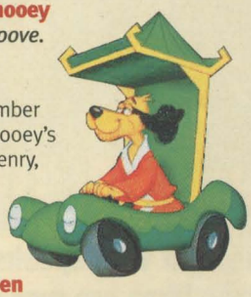
It's his use of the camera and choice of soundtrack that makes Kaurismaki such a great director. He works like a DJ, mixing found sounds of TV, radio, jukebox and speech into a visual rhythm track. His characters will walk into a pub and find a band singing a song directly related to their predicament (Joe Strummer in *I Hired A Contract Killer*, for example). If the camera seems to drift, it's a heartfelt detachment. Although his characters don't talk about their feelings, Kaurismaki's handling provides an empathetic understanding. In his world, less is definitely more.

All four of these films are available now on two videos, Ariel/Hamlet and I Hired/Match Factory by Polygram Video, RRP £15.99. See P82 to order.

Top 10 cartoon sites

1. Battle of the Planets:
http://www.vacuform.com/Gatchaman/GatchMain.htm
Search under *Gatchaman*, the original Jap name... it even has its own web ring!

2. Hong Kong Phooey
http://www.mrgroove.demon.co.uk/hkphooey.html
Did you know number one super guy Phooey's civilian name is Penry, not Henry?



3. Trumpton, Chigley and Camberwick Green
http://www.bbc.co.uk/evans/trumpgo.htm
Brian Cant has a message specially for you...

4. (Help it's the) Hair Bear Bunch
http://www.bonoestente.demon.co.uk/section2/hairbear/index.htm
"Oooh oooh, Mr Peebly..."

5. Banana Splits
http://www.cyberspy.com/~husz/banana.html

"Flipping like a pancake, popping like a cork, Fleagle, Bingo, Drooper and Snork" Altogether now... "Tra-la-la, tra-la-la-la..."

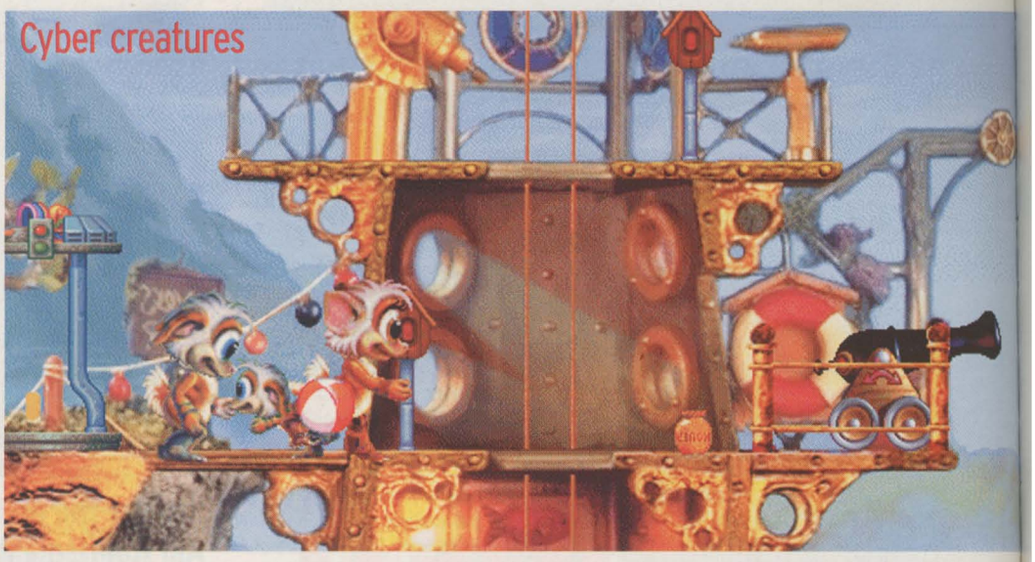
6. Spumco
http://www.spumco.com/
Ren and Stimpy creators preview their new cartoon, *The Goddamn George Liquor Program*. Sounds good.

7. South Park
http://www.jrsconcepts.com/southpark.html
Download entire Real Video episodes of any *South Park* cartoon ever made.

8. The Simpsons
http://www. foxinteractive.com/products/vspringfield/ mainframes.html
The official site has to be the best with a virtual Springfield and downloadable clips.

9. Everything Else
http://www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/1011/
Remember *Bod*, *Mr Benn*, *Potty Time* and all the other surreal kids TV shows? This does.

10. Gifts
http://www.barkeranimation.com/HBLC-102.htm
To splurge several hundred pounds on original art from cartoon shows, click right here.



Heavy petting

Too lazy to keep a goldfish? Get a virtual pet instead

UNLESS YOU SPENT 1997 trapped under a capsized yacht, you'll have noticed a curious obsession that gripped the country. For a few months, Tamagotchi seemed to be everywhere. Very simple, these plastic toys were nothing more than a crapping, beeping, chicken-shaped bunch of pixels on a keyring, yet hardly a day went by without hearing the familiar bleeping that meant the passenger opposite was pressing buttons with slack-jawed intensity .

The tabloids printed stories of how some schoolkid managed to get theirs to live a record number of craps – and how, in Japan, normally sane businessmen were employing Tamagotchi-Nannies to look after their 'babies' in Tamagotchi-crèches. There was even the report that some council or other planned to provide them for the pet-bereaved pensioners in an old people's home.

Why were they so fantastically successful? It wasn't the graphics ("Is that a poo?"); it wasn't the sound-effects ('beep' – needs feeding, 'beep' – needs burying, etc); and it certainly wasn't the three-button gameplay. No. The reason the Tamagotchi was so popular was that once you had been fooled into playing with the thing for five minutes ("Is that all? How do I make it crap again?"), you truly believed that you *had to keep the little bugger alive*.

Not surprisingly, the computer software developers were onto it like a shot. PF Magic Inc. had a big hit with their desktop-pet duo *Dogz and Catz*, which certainly improved on the graphics of the original Tamagotchi.

Meanwhile, a game called *Creatures* by British developers Cyberlife was beginning to gain a massive following. Set in the fictional land of Albia, in *Creatures* you reared, taught and bred a set of furry, artificially intelligent Norns. Not only were Norns able to interact with the player and learn by experience, but they were able to 'breed' with each other and pass on their 'genes' (represented by equations) to their offspring. A net cult of selective breeding clubs which share their eggs has grown up. A quick tour of Norn-fanatics' websites reveals a cornucopia of cross-breeds, Immortal Norns, Blue Norns and even foreign Norns.

With such a huge fanbase installed, Cyberlife are onto a surefire winner with the soon-to-be-released sequel, imaginatively titled *Creatures 2*. The breeding frenzy is set to start all over again, but we can't help thinking that it won't be long before these techno pets are capable of searching the Net themselves to find their own mates, armed only with a list of their preferred attributes and a desire to cut out the middle-man.

INTERNUTTER:
Marj and Fred Franke

http://www.nwlink.com/~ffranke/index.html
A visit to Marj and Fred Franke's homepage is reminiscent of those awful childhood trips to see a dubious auntie and uncle. After the holiday snaps and digitally distorted family pics have been handed round, Marj helpfully introduces us to the world of sculptured crones. "My polymer clay sculptures are ancient women of wit and wisdom" she boasts, before telling us how we can sculpt our own. Thanks Auntie Marj, it's, erm, lovely.

Games review

THE X-FILES

The inevitability of this release can be forgiven due to the out-and-out depth of the product. Despite being a first-person adventure in the soon-to-be-compulsory-for-TV-spin-offs VirtualCinema™ stylee, and therefore unappealing to hardcore gamers who want their thrills to be either more instant or innovative, this game has obviously been so thoroughly thought out that brain strain must have set in. You are Agent Craig Wilmore and you have to solve a case. No surprises there. Along the way you will meet and hopefully be aided by Mulder and Scully (Duchovny and Anderson took time off from the show to shoot scenes for the game so in a sense it influenced the development of the TV series) and, typically, your reactions in a given situation will affect the course of the game. Just make sure you satisfy the system requirements and even the more cynical amongst you will have fun with this. It's extremely detailed and professionally executed. Chris Carter wouldn't stand for anything less using the trademarked *X-Files* name. A fan's wet dream.

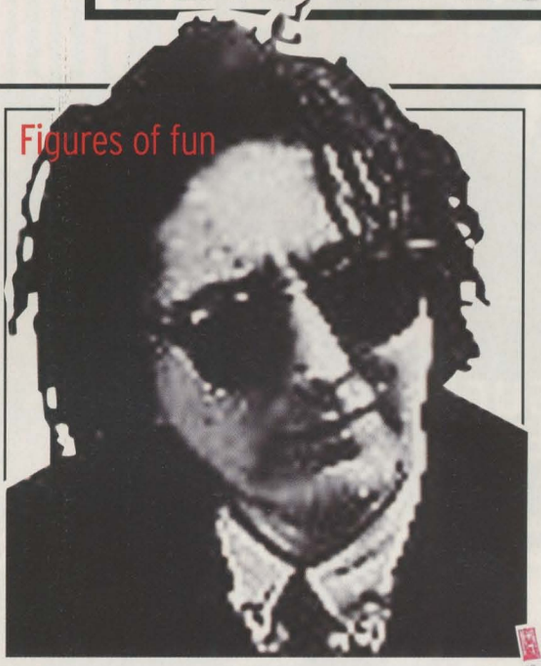
(PC or PowerMac £44.99, out now)

N2O

Ripped to the tits on cattle anaesthetics, *N2O* crashes onto the PlayStation. This epileptic fit-inducing tunnel-based shoot-'em up makes you feel like you're vomiting space dust out of your eyes. If that's possible. If it's not – that's what it's like anyway – it doesn't care. Following in the hallowed footsteps of Atari's ancient *Tempest* (ask yer dad) gameplay consists of sucking up the N2O gas to gain speed, and shooting bug eyed mutant aliens. Doesn't score high in the originality department, but what a looker! Take your prescription in small quantities, unless you want your brain to bleed – and you'll find the gameplay hands out a welcome, albeit short-lived, buzzzzzzzzzzz!!

(PlayStation, £39.99, out now)

Figures of fun



Site-ire

A tour of seditious satire on the net

WHEN JONATHAN SWIFT described satire as "a sort of glass wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own", he can have had little idea of what the internet would do with the genre. Some internet sites attempting to wield the ol' mirror haven't even taken the time to look in it themselves and others just don't realise that what they're brandishing is in fact clear glass. At best, they just aren't sharp enough to cut it; at worst, they don't have a clue what satire is. BIZARRE will attempt to point out some oases in the net-desert. First tip – avoid any site with the word 'satire' in its name.

A good place to start is the links page of Satire Magazine *http://www.intrepid.net/satire/sites.htm*. (that's irony, by the way). Being an American journal, they recommend a lot of sites which won't mean much to Brits so we advise that you head straight to *http://www.rant.co.uk/*, Rant, a site for sore eyes. Satire say, "At least it isn't Benny Hill", completely missing that great man's hard-edged political agenda (sarcasm), but what you find at Rant is a shitload better than the seriousness of much else they link to. Functions such as Spam-o-matic, which will email spam to your mates from fake websites like Loved-Up Teenager's Offshore Online Banking (alternative banking for the rave generation), and the Dalai Lama Link-o-rama ('using the power of his mind and a 56K modem, the Dalai Lama will call forth the very best websites...') should give you an idea. The Dalai Lama will sometimes take you to *http://www.compulink.co.uk/~private-eye/default.htm*, the electronic version of *Private Eye*, whose printed version needs little introduction here.

Lord Gnome's links page is perhaps even better and will take you to a great little place called *http://www.statslab.cam.ac.uk/~johnson/portillo/portaloo.html* The Totally Unofficial Michael Portillo Homepage, as well as the truly inspired *http://www.theonion.com*. *The Onion*, an American print journal which shows the rest of its compatriots how to do it. (Search the archive for 'Keep your shit off my desk' and 'It's not a crack house, it's a crack home' – truly masterful). You can also link to *http://www.lewis-smith.com/newindex.html*, Victor Lewis-Smith's homepage, where you can listen to samples of his hoax calls (including a very un-PC Prof. Stephen Hawking impression). On the media terrorist front, Chris Morris is strongly represented at *http://www.rethink.demon.co.uk/laugh.htm* and *http://www.koekie.org.uk/funnel/* amongst others, and you'd be a big, big fool not to check them out.

the ONION
America's Finest News Source™

Before logging off to place that prank call to the White House, it would be worth visiting *http://www.fadetoblack.com/*, home of Fade To Black (another American site that knows its mirrors from its arse) and searching the archive for 'Sing-along with Louis Farrakhan'. We guess it's just about choosing the right objects of ridicule.

GAMEBOY SPECIAL

The strange world of things that nobody needs but everybody wants

Nintendo Gameboy camera and Gameboy travel bundle

The Gameboy just isn't going to go away as long as Nintendo keep coming up with zappy ideas like these. The world's top selling console now has a digital camera attachment with a 180-degree swivel lens, ideal for sneaky photography (a huge hit in the BIZARRE toilets). Not only can you muck around with the images you shoot, you can also store up to 30 of them in the Gameboy to print onto sticky labels with the printer. Teachers everywhere must be having nervous breakdowns. If you're still not convinced that the portable console isn't just for kids, then the snazzy travel bundle should change your mind. Featuring a carrying case, pocket-sized Gameboy and two games, it will not only get you through tedious aircraft delays this summer, but also lets you into the Gameboy publishing empire for a mere £59.99. You know it makes sense. *Camera £39.99, printer £49.99. (Both are in shops now)*

Read yourself raw!

BIZARRE back issues

Been a naughty boy? Missed our earlier issues? Lucky for you we've got some left which we'll generously let you have in return for £3 each. (US $6.95, OS £3.50).

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ISSUE TEN

ISSUE FOUR

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ISSUE SIX

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ISSUE EIGHT

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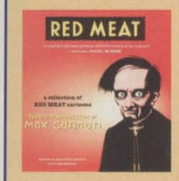
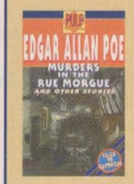
Edited by James Wallis

Hardcore Text



Red Meat
by Max Cannon
(Boxtree, £5.99)
Evil, evil, evil comic strips from the innocent-looking neighbourhood just down the road from the Bundy place. Delightfully twisted. The first few are a bit naff, but the rest are to be fastened to your fridge door. On the inside.

The Ultimate Guide To Unusual Leisure
by Stephen Jarvis
(Robson Books, £10.99)
It reads a bit like a dictionary of sad clubs at times, but as you plough through this collection of exotic interests and strange pastimes, you get the impression that people can get a kick out of almost anything. And you may find something up your street too.



Murders In The Rue Morgue And Other Stories
by Edgar Allen Poe
(Pulp Fictions, £4.99)
A reprint of Poe's atmospheric horror yarns, from an imprint dedicated to re-releasing the best of the early pulp classics. Coming next, we're told, some of H. Rider Haggard's adventure yarns. We can't wait.

Penny In Harness
by Penny Birch
(Nexus, £4.99)
Apparently this is Britain's first pony-girl novel from a major publisher, and quite rude it is too. If bits and bridles do it for you, so will this erotic look into an extraordinary world.

Sixty-Three Closure
by Anthony Frewin
(No Exit Press, £6.99)
Stanley Kubrick's assistant director, Frewin is beginning to resemble the English James Ellroy. His second novel is a darkly twisting account of events behind the Kennedy assassination with a quirk you'd never expect – it's set in Hitchin.

WORST NEW BOOK

"THE ILLEGAL (US) activities described in this work are in no way endorsed by *Winchester/G. Ander Books*" sez the sticker on the cover. Is **Dynamic Marches** by E. Hexum meant to be controversial? Actually it's tedious tales of boring people having nasty sex. It's supposed to be shocking, but it's just dull. Bet that sticker will sell a few copies, though.

Notes from the UNDERGROUND

Find a world of subversive literature through the small press network

IF YOU'RE BORED of the best that the mainstream can offer, and you're after something more tailored to your taste, then you need the small press: writers and artists following their own visions, not what they think will be marketable. It's the home of original ideas, wild creativity and downright strangeness. But your chances of finding its outpourings in your local bookshop are pretty much zero, so where can you look?

Counter Productions started as an off-shoot of Aporia Press and is now a vast mail-order catalogue, offering hundreds of books from the UK and US small press. Titles range from surrealism, radicalism and philosophy to conspiracies, drugs and erotica. And they stock a good range of magazines, including *Hollywood vs the Aliens* (film buffs meet conspiracy nuts), *The Blue Octavo Notebooks* by Franz Kafka, and the latest from *Adbusters*, *The Realist* and hacker zine *2600*.

When he's not being a famous mail-artist, Mark Pawson runs Disinfotainment, which stocks obscure art items from around the world, including his own works. Particularly groovy are *Snacks*, a limited-edition collection of missing-pet posters; *Found Photos*, which collects discarded and rejected photo-booth pictures; John Marr's *Murder Can Be Fun*, which is possibly the best fanzine in the world; *Redneck Manifestos*, the latest outpourings from Jim 'Answer Me!' Goad; and, naturally, Mark's own classic opus, *Mark's Little Book About Kinder Eggs*.

Bug Powder distributes small-press comics and graphics. The general quality is incredibly good and far more interesting than you'll find in most comics shops. A history of the events leading up to WW1 may not sound like prime comics material, but Steven Martin's *Terrible Sunrise* (£2) is brilliantly paced and plotted. *The Man Who Learned To Fly* by Frazer Irving (£7.50) is a gorgeously drawn exploration of good, evil, power and control. At the moment there are only 50 copies in existence, so move fast. Tony McGee's six-part *Dark Weather* is a moody and intriguing story of fucked-up relationships. Debra Hockey produces tiny but immaculate savage short stories, with subjects ranging from the macabre (*Mine In His Arms*) to the biting (*A is for Apple, G is for Goth*). And Jeremy Dennis takes one joke – putting superheroes' names onto pictures of genitals – and makes two top 16-page books out of them: *Giant Sized Man Thing* and *The New Fanny Anthology* (50p each).

If comics of a more in-yer-face nature are your thing, you want the post-*2000AD Hog* by Rik Rawlings and friends (£2). 'Includes pictures of naked women and cocks and shit' it warns. Pornographic? Probably. But fun.

Vague, edited by Tom Vague, started as a punk zine in 1977 and has since covered cyberpunk, the Red Army Faction and *Apocalypse Now!* retold as a bus-ride into the heart of Stoke Newington. Now up to issue 30, it's deep into a three-part psychogeographical history of Notting Hill. Best of the rest: issue 23 (*God Told Me To Do It*, £3.50), issue 25 (*Great British Mistake*, a compilation, £7.95) and issue 27 (*Anarchy in the UK*, on the Angry Brigade, £6.95).

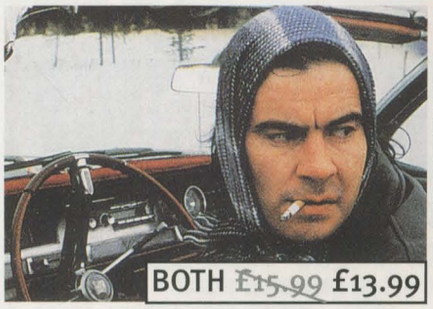
And while there are hundreds of music zines out there, *The Sound Projector* (£3.50) is particularly fine, mixing art from leading British underground artists with intelligent articles on Pere Ubu, and Akira Ifukube, the man who scored the original *Godzilla* movies.

If you want to learn more, apart from the distributors above there are three vital sources of information. *Factsheet 5* is a magazine that reviews thousands of small-press magazines and books, (£3 + 75p p&p from Counter Productions). *Bypass*, its UK equivalent, is smaller but no less energetic (£1.80 + 50p p&p from Counter Productions). The *National Small Press Centre Handbook* (£12) lists over 2,500 small presses, and includes advice, and a resource directory. If you've got a yen for seeing your work in print, this could be the most important book you ever buy.

***Bug Powder Distribution**, Guild Box 123, Edgbaston Park Road, Birmingham B15 2TU. Cheques to Pete Ashton. **Counter Productions**, PO Box 556, London SE5 0RL. **Disinfotainment**, Mark Pawson, PO Box 664, London E3 4QR. **Hog**, Rik Rawling, 4a Hardy Avenue, Churwell, Leeds, LS27 7SJ. **National Small Press Centre**, BM Bozo, London WC1N 3XX. **The Sound Projector**, BM Indefinite, London WC1N 3XX. Cheques to Ed Pinsent. **Vague**, c/o Wong-Singh Jones, 253 Portobello Road, London W11 1LR.*

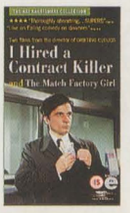
$ BIZARRE OFF£RS

SAVE £2 on all the volumes you need to complete your Aki Karismaki collection. What, you don't have an Aki Karismaki collection? Then you need to start one! At once! Life isn't the same without a dose of Finnish lunacy from the ground-breaking king of existentialist kitsch.

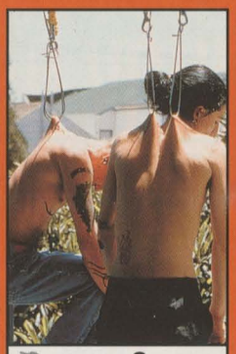


BOTH ~~£15.99~~ £13.99

ARIEL (and *Hamlet Goes Business*) Finland's finest road movie: who would be mad enough to drive across Finland in an open-topped Caddy? Well, after he's made redundant Taisto feels he's got nothing better to do than set off in search of females, fun, and frozen knackers. Plus Karismaki takes on Shakespeare, setting the Bard's dismal Scandinavian outing in a rubber duck factory.



I HIRED A CONTRACT KILLER (and *The Match Factory Girl*) – a depressed clerk hires an East End gangster to kill him, then falls in love and tries to cancel the contract. Plus Karismaki's bleak take on the Cinderella story.



~~£12.99~~ £11.99

With FREE POSTER!

PHYSICAL GRAFFITI Mary Whitehouse came out of retirement just to fight the release of this video. When you see it you'll know why. Find out why anyone would want to hammer a nail through his penis, hang himself up by hooks, stick spikes in his head and generally abuse himself. This tape's got more shocks than any video nasty, as young punks from California's skate/surf/piercing scene explain the rush they get from slicing and dicing. Eye-popping stuff from SSM Freesports.

~~£15.99~~ £13.99

BANG You probably haven't heard of *Bang*. Neither had we. We're glad we did though. Filmed on the run in Los Angeles, it stars Darling Narita as a young Asian-American girl who, evicted and abused, steals an LAPD motorcycle cop's gear and spends a day exploring the sudden power this disguise affords her. The film was shot at breakneck speed over five weeks – those helicopters you can hear in the background aren't a sound effect, they're the genuine police chasing the film crew! **SAVE £2!**

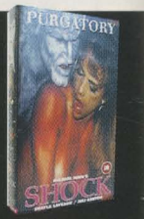
TWELVE MONKEYS COLLECTORS' EDITION

We like *Twelve Monkeys*. We like it enough to buy it all over again in the collector's edition along with special bonus feature *The Hamster Factory*, a 90-minute documentary about the making of the film. Terry Gilliam's grim vision of the future, starring Bruce Willis as a bewildered time-travelling convict, is an SF classic already.

~~£12.99~~ £11.99

REDEMPTION VIDEOS

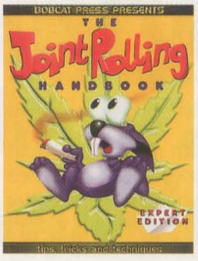
SHOCK – the sequel to *Latex* takes you even deeper into the psyche of the famous anti-hero Malcolm Stevens. "Sex as art... on the masterpiece level".



VAMPYROS LESBOS – This sleaze epic features fanged sex-kitten Soledad Miranda as an active skirt-lifter who lures unsuspecting beauties back to her island for a bit of necro nookie and vampiric enslavement – your face or mine?

Still available: *Salon Kitty, Latex, Succubus, Behind Convent Walls, Who Saw Her Die, In the Folds of the Flesh, Witchfinder General, Poor Cecily and Curse of the Vampire.*

~~£12.99~~ £11.99



~~£5.99~~ £4.99

THE JOINT ROLLING HANDBOOK It doesn't just have the Camberwell Carrot, it has the whole bloody greengrocers. Bobcat's *Joint Rolling Handbook* is slim but necessary reading for devotees of funny cigarettes. Isn't it worth £4.99 of anyone's money to learn how to make a spliff in the shape of a cross?

~~£8.00~~ £7.50

MONKEY MAGIC Will you say YES to a tankful of spunky monkeys in your life? Will you promise to enjoy the playful antics of these little swimming bugs that you've always wanted since you saw them advertised in the back of a tatty copy of the *Amazing Spider-Man* as a kid? Will you groove to their sea monkey vibes, love them, cherish them and study for your doctorate in sea monkey-ology? Now BIZARRE have arranged for you to get your very own sea monkey aquarium for just £7.50... you get a tank, freeze dried pets, feeding powder, booklet and a big colourful box.

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Poor Cecily	054	£11.99	$26.00	£12.99		
Shock	055	£11.99	$26.00	£12.99		
Curse Of The Vampire	056	£11.99	$26.00	£12.99		
Behind Convent Walls	001	£11.99	$26.00	£12.99		
Salon Kitty	002	£11.99	$26.00	£12.99		
Latex	003	£11.99	$26.00	£12.99		
Succubus	004	£11.99	$26.00	£12.99		
WitchFinder General	005	£11.99	$26.00	£12.99		
Who Saw Her Die?	024	£11.99	$26.00	£12.99		
In the Folds of the Flesh	025	£11.99	$26.00	£12.99		
Vampyros Lesbos	036	£11.99	$26.00	£12.99		
Twelve Monkeys	086	£11.99	$26.00	£12.99		
Ariel	088	£13.99	$30.00	£14.99		
I Hired a Contract Killer	087	£13.99	$30.00	£14.99		
Bang	085	£13.99	$30.00	£14.99		
Sea Monkeys	084	£7.50	$19.00	£9.50		
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All videos are PAL VHS format, which may not play properly in some non-UK countries.

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BZ12

Edited by Mark 'Mr Moog' Blacklock

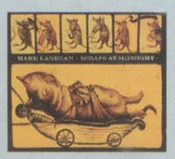
Sonic strangeness

POLE
CD1
Submarining dub music. From Stefan Betke, an employee of Berlin's Dubplates and Mastering Studio (the kind of place talked about in hushed tones by techno anoraks), Pole's music is a masterful synthesis of swathes and washes of bass and melody counterbalanced by light, rhythmic, interfered-with interference. Deeper than Wittgenstein.
Kiff SM, out now

LYDIA LUNCH
WIDOWSPEAK
BIZARRE says: read Lydia's books and buy her music – sexy, crazy devil bitch that she is, she knows more about filth, men, shit and life than most of us will ever see on a screen, never mind experience first hand. At times viciously angry, at others coming on with the vampish charm of a knee-trembler in the bogs at a sweaty punk club, this album ultimately liberates and educates. And there's two discs of it.
New Millennium Communications, out now

THE STRIKEBOYS
SELECTED FUNKS
Another German act, picked up this time by Wall of Sound. That they are the label's first signing since the Propellerheads should make the funk levels apparent. At times deeper (in that popular phased style) and more disco-electroid than the Props, at others The Strikeboys let the acid noises rip with gay abandon. Should destroy dancefloors nationwide.
Wall of Sound, out now

THE FLYING LUTTENBACHERS
DESTROY ALL MUSIC
Fruitloops of the month, the Flying Luttenbachers also win the trophy for most accurately named album. They like to fuck with structure and harmony like residents of Mississippi like to fuck with their siblings. Imagine insanely discordant horns and guitars put in a juicer, drunk with a gallon of tequila and puked back into your face. Yeah!
Destroy All Music, out now



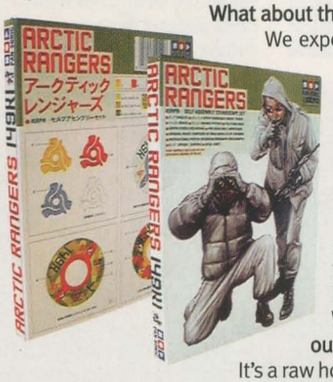
MARK LANEGAN
SCRAPS AT MIDNIGHT
Frontman of Seattle's mighty Screaming Trees, Mark Lanegan reaches his third solo LP sounding more and more like the whiskey-soaked lovechild of Johnny Cash and Lee Hazlewood. Gloriously down-and-out songs to cry in your beer to as a bad moon rises overhead.
Sub Pop via Beggars Banquet, out now

Pan sonic

Sonic Boom Boys

Odd Finnish technoids PAN SONIC team up with Suicide's ALAN VEGA

LAST MONTH A POWERFUL and frightening record on the Blast First label hit the nation's record shops. It's called *endless* and is a surprisingly alchemical collaboration between the Finnish minimalist techno producers Miko Vainio and Ilpo Väisänen, collectively known as Pan sonic (until recently they were Panasonic, a name more associated with a Japanese electronic firm who claim to have thought of it first), and punk twister Mr Alan Vega, Elvine frontman of Suicide. This is music you *feel*. Although not as extreme as some Pan sonic material, the subsonic grooves and high level screeches and clicks work on a different level to traditional music. Then Vega does his thang on top. Freaky shit, maaan, described by *The Observer on Sunday*'s music critic as "either the future of music or the worst art joke ever".



Imagine our delight, then, when we learned of another exciting Pan sonic project, this time in conjunction with Robert Green, a young English graphic designer. It's a limited double pack 7" single which has beats on one disc and 'melody' on the other, all packaged in a retro take on those little boxes of toy soldiers you'd paint yourself, were you more into painting than chewing plastic. It's called 'Arctic Rangers' and you should buy one now.

Robert's inspiration? "I heard Panasonic's music and then I heard that they made their own instruments. I found out a bit about the band and heard that they were soldiers, in fact one member left to do National Service and never came back. And I woke up one morning with a hangover, had the idea and approached Jon Wozencroft (Touch Records) with it and he put me onto Blast First.

"I thought, wouldn't it be nice to do something completely different to the antiseptic design of most techno covers? I sensed from their music that they had a sense of humour, it was so extreme. And my instincts were right, they do have a sense of humour, but you have to get them a bit drunk.

"The beats on one of them is a speed garage tune. They're having a laugh. I said to Miko they'd done a garage tune and he replied "I know" with a wry smile on his face".

Over to Pan sonic. How do you feel about the 'Arctic Rangers' single?
We like it.

What about the name change?
We expected that to happen a long time ago – no big deal altogether.

What was Alan Vega like? Mad?
He was like we expected him to be. He's not mad, he is Vega.

What's the music scene like in Finland?
There is a strong underground scene, but we have been away for the last few years, so we don't know exactly what is going on.

What's your idea of a good night out?
It's a raw horsemeat, rockabilly kind of thing.

Influences?
Sushi, sashimi, bowling, weather, horse races.

The endless LP and the limited edition 'Arctic Rangers' single are both out now on Blast First.

BIZARRE OLD FOLK

12. Neneh Cherry

RIP RIG AND Panic: soul-funk fusionmeisters, or annoying jazz-skiffle pundits? Back in 1981 no-one was sure, and their anarcho-collective ideals covered a multitude of musical sins, not least homie pin-up Neneh Cherry's wailing lead vocals. Back then 17-year-old Neneh Cherry was more Plump Teen than Inna City Mama.

FRISKY IN FRISCO

They used to wear flowers in their hair in San Francisco. Now they sport fetish-wear made from inner tubes. CHARLES GATEWOOD gets the low-down

YOU WANT WORLD-class weird? Welcome to San Francisco, home of the Golden Gate Bridge, Haight Ashbury, and Tony Bennett's heart. The city that inspired Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and a host of hipster novelists boasts more inspired strangeness per square mile than any other place in the USA.

10am
BOOGALOO'S
3296 22nd Street

Savvy Mission District bohemians begin their day with Godzilla-sized breakfasts at the happening Boogaloo's. As you eat, scan the comprehensive underground listings (and kinky personal ads) in the free *SF Weekly* and *SF Guardian* newspapers. And drink lots of espresso – you'll need the energy.

11am
THE MISSION DISTRICT

San Francisco's Mission district is the coolest neighbourhood for scenesters, and Valencia Street (between 16th and 24th) is the main drag, hopping with dozens of alternative shops, cafés and underground art. At Good Vibrations (1210 Valencia) you'll find the best selection of sex toys, erotic books and strange fetish magazines. Don't miss their whacky antique vibrator collection, featuring famous early pleasure machines. While there, pick up the *Spectator*, a weekly tabloid listing SF's best erotic happenings. Then, after purchasing some Rattlesnake Penis Elixer (it puts pep in your step!) at Botanica Yoruba (998 Valencia), check out the weird films at ATA next door. Afterwards, drop into Body Manipulations (3234 16th), SF's smart choice for body piercing, branding, cutting and custom scarification. Your last stop in the Mission is the aptly named Balmy Alley (24th, between Harrison and Treat), with wild murals by neighbourhood artists.

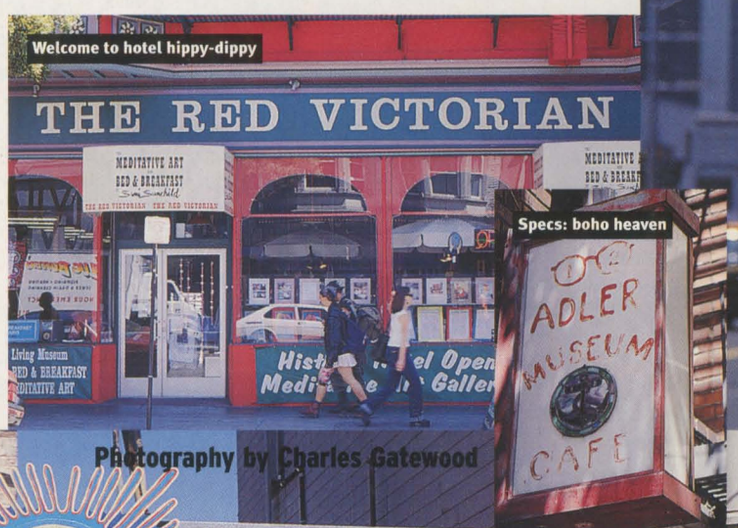
1pm
THE UPPER HAIGHT

The intrepid traveller braves crowds of beer hippies, scruffy Deadheads, spaced-out guitar whackers and spare-change artists to explore some really great shops, like Annubis Warbus (1525 Haight), which features masses of cool books and zines (with tattooing and piercing in the back, natch). Booksmith (144 Haight) also has an astonishing variety of alternative books and Reckless Records (1401) has that new Switchblade Symphony LP you were so desperate to purchase. Haight Ashbury retains the hippy traditions it founded in the 1960s. Longhairs approaching you mumbling "buds" or "sense" are offering pot, and the flowerchild whispering "doses" is not looking to give you a social disease – she's hawking acid.

2.30pm
THE LOWER HAIGHT

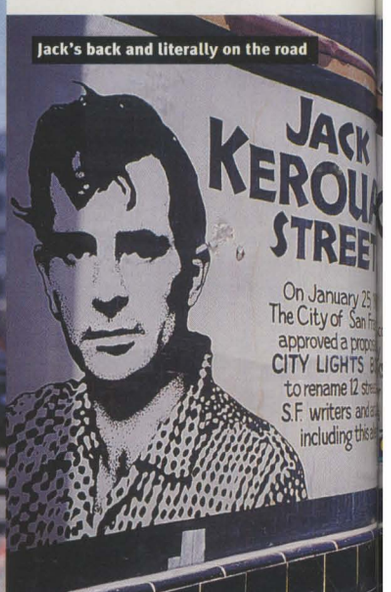
The Lower Haight is more hipster than tripster, young and artsy with a cool industrial edge and a style all of its own. Grab a cappucino at the Horse Shoe (566 Haight) and enjoy some of

On the arse end of Folsom street



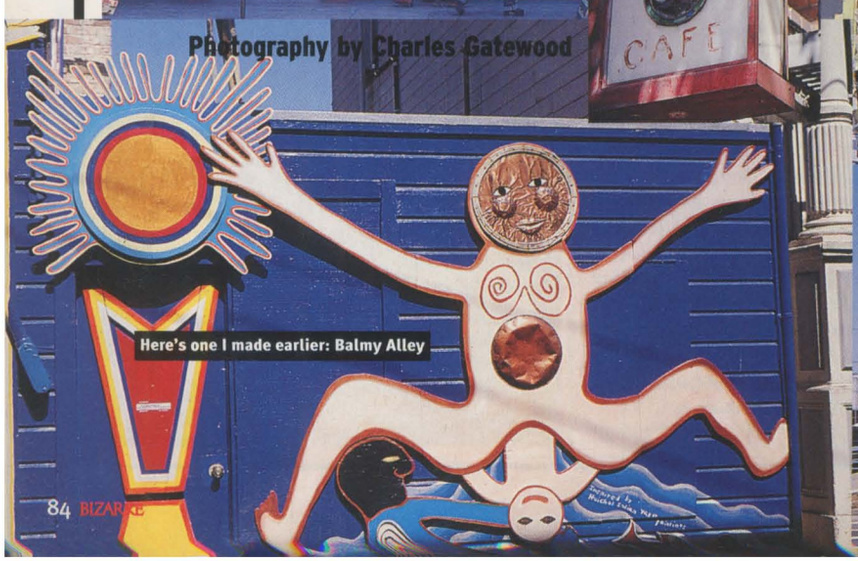
Welcome to hotel hippy-dippy

Specs: boho heaven



Jack's back and literally on the road

Photography by Charles Gatewood


Here's one I made earlier: Balmy Alley

One Tree by artist Rigo

the best people-watching in town, as stylish slackers constantly seek to redefine 'the look'. Once you're buzzed on caffeine, walk across the street to Naked Eye (533), SF's premiere weird magazine and video store. A few doors up, Used Rubber (597) makes pervy shoulder bags and other hepcat accessories (highly prized on the local fetish scene) from old inner tubes.

The best watering holes on the block are Tornado (547) and Mad Dog In the Fog (530). Down a cold pint and gab with the locals before rounding the corner to visit Erno Tattoo (252 Fillmore), the city's best parlour for the tribal blackwork so popular here. Nickie's Bar-B-Que (460 Haight) is a funky black rib joint by day, but by night it throbs with the ecstatic trance-dance rhythms of SF's best DJ, Cheb-i-Sabbah.

4pm
FISHERMAN'S WHARF

Fisherman's Wharf is a famous tourist trap, and while most of the Wharf is avoidable, it does provide one spectacular (and foul-smelling) show: the wild sea lions at Pier 39. A few years ago, these fish-breathed monsters took over this pier, and today watching the huge barking bulls play king of the dock is the best free show in town.

As you stroll, eat a crab cocktail (it's delicious), try the sourdough bread (it's sour), but be warned that even though cable car ads tout Rice-a-Roni as 'The San Francisco Treat', in truth Rice-a-Roni is the vilest crap I've ever tasted. You have been warned!

6pm
NORTH BEACH

The North Beach neighbourhood, where Kerouac, Ferlinghetti and Ginsberg once howled, is one of San Francisco's jewels. Beautiful Victorian homes line the magnificent hilly streets of this upscale area. Ferlinghetti still owns and runs the famous City Lights Books (261 Columbus), SF's best bohemian bookshop, and a visit here is mandatory, for this is the Real Deal and Tom Waits shops there. Then, after an espresso at the picturesque Café Trièste (601 Vallejo) or a pint of Anchor Steam Beer at Vesuvio's (255 Columbus, at Jack Kerouac Alley), cross the street to the Condor Bar (Broadway and Columbus) to visit the Birthplace of Topless Dancing. Look for the plaque commemorating the night in 1954 when stripper Carol Doda first appeared in a topless swimsuit, shocking the world with her 44" silicone-enhanced breasts.

Then walk up North Beach's picturesque main drag, Columbus Avenue. Buy some strange postcards at Quantity Postcards (507 Columbus), then sit down for a delicious dinner at Moose's (1652 Stockton), where you may spot SF's playboy mayor Willie Brown with one of his young girlfriends.

8pm
THE TENDERLOIN DISTRICT

The Tenderloin, a colourful downtown neighbourhood, is famous for having the prettiest prostitutes in the city. Check out the stylish streetwalkers on O'Farrell and Sutter, but note: some of these sexy beauties are, or once were, men. If transvestites and transsexuals are your bag, you'll love the Mother Lode (1081 Post), a pick-up joint always filled with glamorous Asian trannies and their freaky admirers. Nearby, check out the choice erotica at The Magazine (920 Larkin) and ask about their three floors of 'good stuff' upstairs.

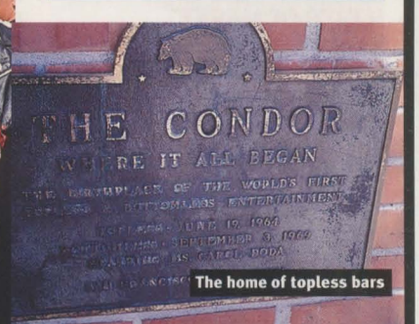
After a quick beer at the popular dance club Deco (510 Larkin), you'll head for tonight's Big Splurge, an evening at the Mitchell Brothers O'Farrell Theatre (895 O'Farrell). This hugely popular club is pricey ►

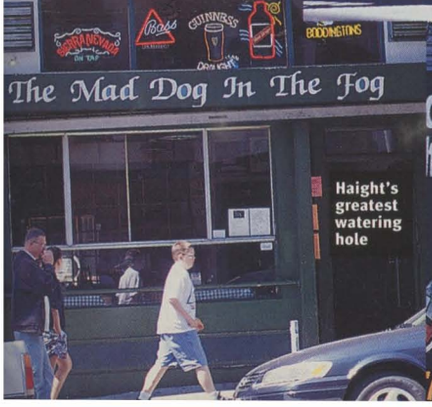
FUNKY TOWN

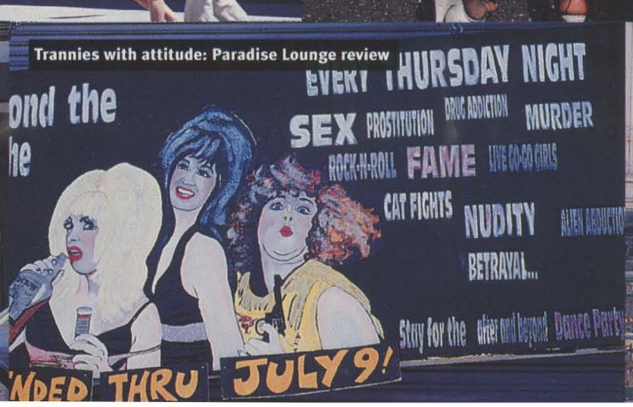
That San Francisco has been inspirational to film-makers cannot be disputed. But what do their visions of the city by the Bay tell us about it?

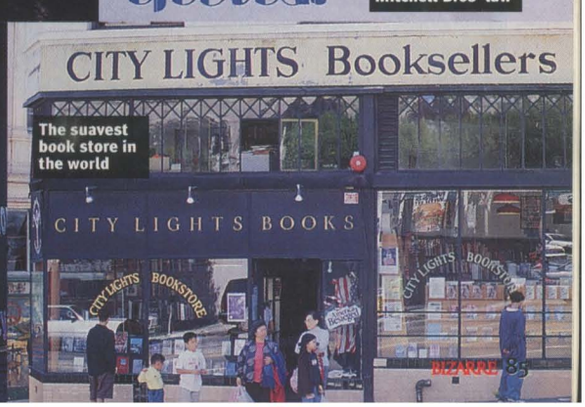
- That it's brilliant for car chases up and down steep hills – *Bullitt* (Peter Yates, 1968)
- That it's dangerous for losing mysterious femme fatales and then finding their shadier doubles – *Vertigo* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1958)
- That you *can* escape from Alcatraz, but only if you are Lee Marvin – *Point Blank* (John Boorman, 1967)
- But then again, Alcatraz is good for holing up with loads of poison gas and threatening to blow up the city – *The Rock* (Michael Bay, 1996)
- That the city is full of deranged serial killers and cops that are only marginally less scary – *Dirty Harry* (Don Seigel, 1971)
- That taking a lodger could be a bad move – *Pacific Heights* (John Schlesinger, 1990)
- That the nightlife is really interesting, especially for goths – *Interview With The Vampire* (Neil Jordan, 1994)
- That you could meet some space men – *Voyage Home: Star Trek IV* (Leonard Nimoy, 1986)

Where's Peggy? The Mitchell Bros' theatre
O'Farrell Theatre
"THE PLACE TO GO IN SF" PLAYBOY
1998 ADULT FILM STAR
LENE HEFNER JULY 8 THRU 11
CONTINUOUS NUDE STAGE SHOW
SIZZLING GREEN DOOR ROOM
SPICY HOT CABANARAMA
TANTALIZING ULTRA ROOM
AMATEUR CONTEST MON 8PM









SAN FRANCISCO

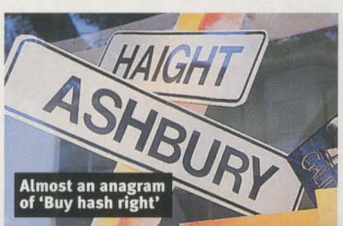
1 Main Street, Boogaloo's
2 The Mission District, Valencia Street
3 The Upper Haight
4 The Lower Haight
5 Fisherman's Wharf, Pier 39
6 North Beach, Columbus Avenue
7 The Tenderloin District, O'Farrel Street
8 South of Market, Folsom Street and Otis Street
9 Church Street, Sparky's Diner
10 Harrison Street and 6th Street, Endup

($40 plus tips), but worth every penny. The O'Farrell has the best girls, the kinkiest shows and the most outrageous play spaces. Also, don't miss the 'Hall of Fame' room with its plaques of appreciation from the Police and Fire Departments.

11pm
SOUTH OF MARKET

You only live once (and sometimes not even then), so head south of Market to savour gourmet microbrews at 20 Tank Brewery (316 11th Street) and The Holy Cow (1535 Folsom) before moving on to hear the jazz at Slim's (375 11th Street) or stoner sounds at the multi-roomed Paradise Lounge (1501 Folsom).

Next, strap on your brand-new fetish gear (from Stormy Leather, 1508 Howard), and head for the Power Exchange (74 Otis) for 'safe, sane and consensual' S&M play (Fridays and Saturdays). On Wednesdays, don't miss the Bondage-A-Go-Go (278 11th Street) where your pervy looks will permit you access to the dungeon. But be cool – ask before touching.



Almost an anagram of 'Buy hash right'

3am
SPARKY'S DINER

242 Church Street

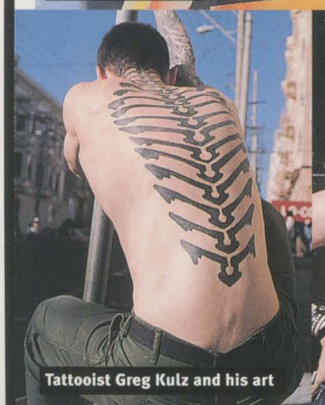
Sparky's is an all-night hangout for San Francisco's most colourful night crawlers. That green mohawk with flying saucer eyes in the next seat (who just ordered five glasses of water with his fries) knows a thing or two about weird. Chat him up as you enjoy your late night snack.

9am
ENDUP

6th Street at Harrison Street

Why do you think they call it Endup, buddy? So here you are, rubbing elbows with San Francisco's most persistent and flamboyant tweakers, bopping until you drop.

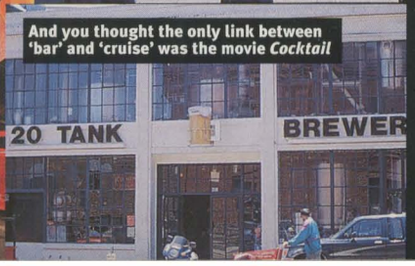
Don't swallow any little white pills or unknown substances here. Instead, go to your hotel and get some sleep. You've earned it. B


Tattooist Greg Kulz and his art

South of Market, things are strong, dark and frothy... and the girl's not bad either

A flying cow with a map of America on it? Probably just an acid flashback

For all your second-hand latex cross-your-part bra requirements



And you thought the only link between 'bar' and 'cruise' was the movie *Cocktail*

ESSENTIAL INFO

GETTING THERE

Both British Airways and Virgin Atlantic fly direct from Heathrow to San Francisco International airport. A 21-day advance economy flight from Virgin is approximately £566 plus airport tax, whereas a BA 7-day advance economy is £728 plus airport tax (£44.80).

GETTING AROUND

Supershuttle will bring you door-to-door to and from the airport for $11 (tel 415 558 8500). Rent-A Wreck cars rent 'Cars With Personality', starting at $25 a day (2955 Third Street, tel 415 282 6293). If you can't find a cab on the street, call Yellow Cab (415 626 2345) or Luxor Cab (415 282 6293). Taxis are generally the best way of getting around in San Francisco, as they are relatively cheap and don't operate a pay-per-person fare as they do in most cities. As far as public transport goes, the MUNI bus system is unreliable and overcrowded, despite running all hours of the night and being pretty cheap at $1.25 per fare. The BART subway is more reliable, but operates a limited service into the outlaying suburban areas of SF.

STAYING THERE

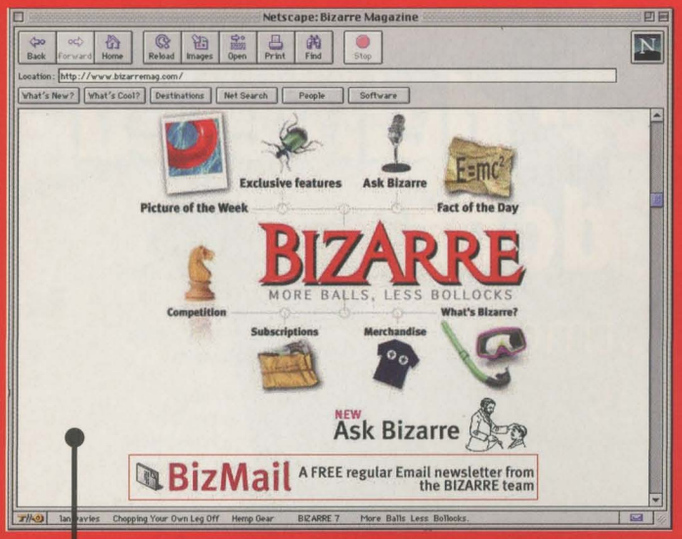
The Phoenix Hotel, 601 Eddy, tel 415 776 1380. Rooms start at $109 a night, and book in advance. This is an artsy hotel favoured by musical luminaries. Spot the star as you enjoy complementary breakfast by the pool, or enjoy exotic drinks in the blue Blackflip Lounge.
The Red Vic Hotel, 1665 Haight Street, tel 415 864 1978. Rooms start at $60 a night and book in advance. Inexpensive and extremely colourful, it's located a stoner's throw from the fabulous Golden Gate Park. Each room at the Red Vic is decorated hippy-dippy stylee.
The Green Tortoise Guest House, 490 Broadway, tel 415 834 1000. You'll find a comfortable bunk in a clean dorm for $18.

EATING & DRINKING

Boogaloo's 3296 22nd Street.
Cha Cha Cha 1805 Haight.
The Horse Shoe 566 Haight.
The best watering holes on The Lower Haight are **Tornado** (547) and **Mad Dog In the Fog** (530).
Café Trièste 601 Vallejo.
Vesuvio's 255 Columbus.
Spec's 12 Adler, a proper beatnik bar.

SIGHTS

A climb on the rocks above the ruins of the old Sutro Baths (Geary and Ocean Beach) yields a drop-dead view of the Golden Gate Bridge and the Marin Headlands. Afterwards, stop at the Mechanical Museum (behind the nearby Cliff House) to dig the antique sideshows.
The Green Tortoise Bus Lines, tel 415 821 0803, run inexpensive adventure tours for international backpackers.
Harbin Hot Springs, tel 1-800 622 2477, is a New Age, 'clothing optional' resort 80 miles north of SF. Day visits cost $20.
For up-to-the-minute weirdness, call the **Weird Event Hotline,** tel 415 289 6666.



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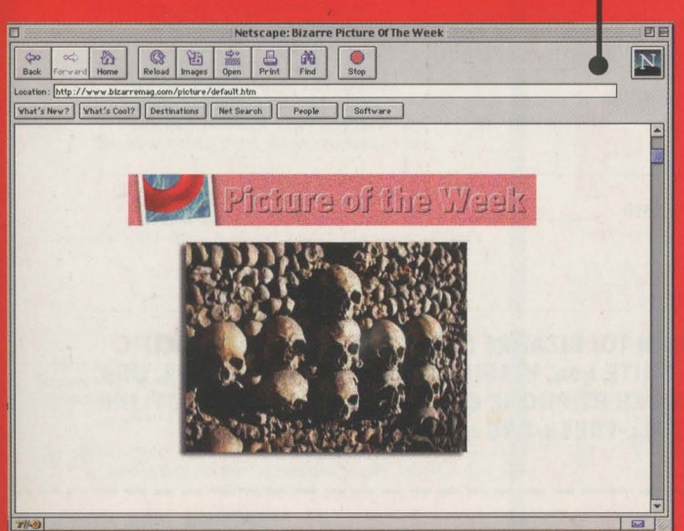
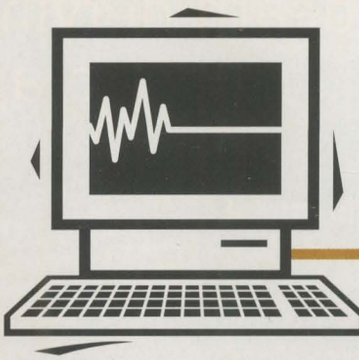


Turn Yourself On



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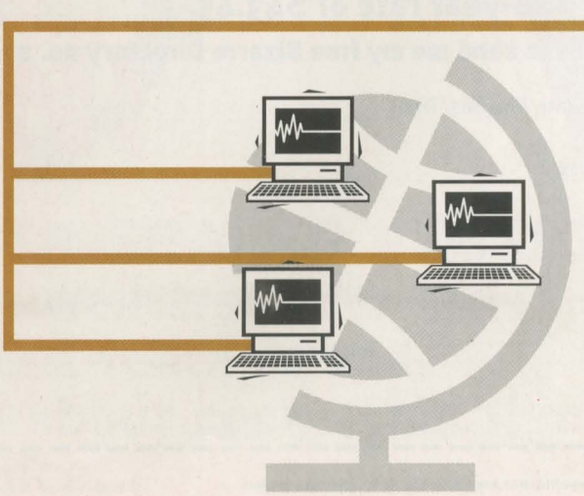

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Limeys see page 69

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"Man is the only animal that can remain on friendly terms with the victims he intends to eat until he eats them."
– Samuel Butler

*one month early pre-emptive strike

In issue 13, on sale 17 September...

BIZARRE HALLOWEEN SPECIAL!*

More BLOOD!

More SHAGGING!

More FUN!

ANOTHER SEALED SECTION:

- **World's weirdest porn vids**
- **Japanese tentacle sex**
- **Things about cocks that'll make you wince...**

letters

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OR EMAIL THEM TO: bizarre@johnbrown.co.uk

*Compile and edit the letters page? Oh Mum, do I **have** to?*

doug less

Having been a Lido regular, I was both puzzled and bewildered by your article 'Menace to Sobriety' which appeared in your July issue. This referred to major babe action at the Lido in Douglas, Isle of Man. If a babe-lusting biker booked a trip to the Isle of Man for the sole purpose of visiting the birthplace of the infamous 'Miss Wet T-Shirt' competition, i.e. the above-mentioned Lido, he would have the pleasure of an evening sat in a deserted car-park.

The Palace Lido Ballroom, as it was originally called, was razed to the ground around seven years ago, thus ending an era and a drinking haven for thousands of mad bikers, along with one of the biggest discos in Europe.

The reason I need to inform you of this mind-blowing error is that I have just recovered from a mental break-down after reading the aforementioned article. Thinking that I had been living in a dream for the last few years (i.e. a Bobby Ewing shower job), I raced down to my former paradise of the weekend, only to find a large rectangle of tarmac with cars on it. The shock almost killed me.

So, to sum it up briefly... get your facts right, you bastards! Or I'll have to get violent with you, like I did with the car-park attendant.

Charlotte Newton, Isle of Man

Buggery. That's what we get for trusting an Australian journalist to write about the Isle of Man.

dungeon crawl

I have purchased a copy of BIZARRE magazine. I thoroughly enjoyed Gary Trotter's article on Mistress Scarlet. Found it very impressive.

Recently completed a year-long course on creative writing. Covered many aspects of writing, including TV scripts. One project was a short story: 'Dressed to Kill', a bizarre thriller.

Mistress Scarlet's dungeon is very fascinating. Particularly interesting were the varied torture instruments, especially the dentist's chair, plus rubber mask.

Is it possible to be put in contact with Mistress Scarlet? I would like to visit her dungeon.

D.W, Stevenage

This is for a creative writing project, right?

video killed

I just felt compelled to write, as I have just finished the most boring, ill-spent and utterly shite 21 minutes in my 29 years. Yes, that's right, I have watched *Bullets & Babes*, the BIZARRE video.

I guess this letter won't get me a crate of beer. I do love your magazine, but your free tape was wank. I don't blame you of course, it's censorship. Anyway, you keep up the good work, and leave shite tapes to the likes of *Loaded* magazine.

D. Young, Eccles

Just to keep you happy, we'll never give anything away free ever again.

fuck tape

As an avid reader of your absorbing magazine, I thought you'd be interested to hear that two years ago I watched a Channel 4 documentary on the subject of 'paraphilia' or 'beyond love'.

This programme included self-inflicted amputation and necrophilia and the like.

It inspired me to write a song whilst at college, which now features on a 6-track demo (with another song about tight-wearing, I have to admit). This cassette is available for £2.50 including postage and packing to those who seek tongue-in-cheek musical knowledge (and I'm not talking about felching either).

Do I qualify for a taste of Boddingtons?

Russell Hunt, Flat 8, 26 Ashleigh Road, Leicester, L63 oFA

No, you don't. And next time, take out a small ad to flog your tapes.

lizard king

I understand I was mentioned in the latest issue of BIZARRE, in an article about the Top Ten Bizarre Fetishes.

First of all, I want to know why mine was only #9.

Second, you got a few names wrong. My online handle is spelled 'Dinosorceror', and the web site you posted for my macrophiliac stuff is actually from an old server that I never deleted my old junk off of. My new address, which goes to a new area I call the 'Macrocosm', is at: http://www.ptialaska.net/~dino/macro.html

Could you publish them in the next issue? I'd surely appreciate it. And naturally I'll have to try to get a copy of this issue up here in Fairbanks, Alaska. I do appreciate the mention, and I look forward to seeing my name in print. Thanks!

The Dinosorceror of Lava Dome IV, via email

bizarre love

I'm a 17-year-old American and I happened across your magazine. I was flipping through it and contemplated buying it. I thought surely my girlfriend would kill me if she knew I was looking at a magazine like yours.

The next day I saw her, she tossed a copy of your magazine in my lap. She told me it was the coolest thing she had seen in a long time and pointed out a couple of articles for me to look at. Ever since then I've felt more comfortable telling her anything because now I know she really is as sick as I am! Now when we see your magazine on the news stand, we both buy a copy. Thanks. Keep up the excellent work.

Daniel Wolfe, South Bend, Indiana

True love. We may barf.

wee, the people

What I want to know is how 'Sarah M, student' (BIZARRE, July, page 32) recognised the taste of wee.

Dr Tim Healey, Barnsley

Does your waiting room have tatty old copies of BIZARRE in it?

strip tip

I just wanted to let you know how useful your magazine came in for my last job. I worked as a stripper in a lounge, and I would bring the new copies of your magazine to work with me. Often, if a guy sat down next to me while I was reading it, and his only reaction was "Oh wow, that's really cool!" I pretty much knew he would be an okay guy to talk to.

Other uses for your unusual tome soon became apparent. If one of the girls was stuck with a total asshole, all she had to do was borrow the magazine for a few minutes, then go back, sit next to the guy, and flip through the pages, pointing things out and making comments on the pictures. Without fail the jerk would get up and leave within five minutes.

So all the girls of B. N. in Miami really appreciate all of your fine work. Keep it up! And we'll keep it up on this side of the ocean!

Jasmyn, via email

media circus

Why haven't you featured the incredible 'Enigma' from the Jim Rose Circus yet? He's now almost all tattooed in blue ink, and that's as well as being tattooed as a huge jigsaw puzzle, and having two coral horns grafted onto his skull... which grow! This man is surely the most bizarre person in the world; find him and get inside his mind!

Vella, Aberystwyth

'blood-soaked bible'

What a pleasantly sick and grotesque magazine you have graced Planet Earth with. From each filth-ridden story every issue seems to give an even bigger thrill to the perverse-minded. Where else do you find erotica mixed with the sordid facts of necrophilia? This magazine is surely the ultimate blood-caked bible for the open-minded.

Your interview with Eileen Daly from *Razor Blade Smile* was truly legendary. The traits and origins of vampirism are all well and good but one does like to see a vampire dressed in tight lycra or leather, and I would not mind sinking my fangs into her luscious neck.

And how about an article on Satanism, with its dark and mysterious rituals and its leanings towards porn? I am sure it would go down a treat with many of your warm-hearted readers.

Anyway, thanks for the excellent read and video. Please keep your morbid and stomach-churning tales of bizarreness coming my way, as it is mind-blowing.

Nicholas Walker, Nottingham

Aw... you say the nicest things. But you get no beer for crawling.

back in black

I agree with last month's letters by A.Maloney and 'Satan's Little Helper'. An article on the Black Metal scene would be cool. But I think an article on Heavy Metal-inspired crimes throughout the history of metal as a whole would be cooler!

And how about an article on suicide, including photos of victims and stories of the more bizarre ways people have killed themselves? And maybe you could do something on the underground 'real life' vampire scene?

Kristian, Shaw, Oldham

little things

You want mad museums? How about one I found on holiday – the miniature museum in Mijas, Spain. It's dedicated to pictures painted on pinheads, like Abraham Lincoln and Jesus. Mad!

John St Clair, London

Enough of this tomfoolery, you young scamps. As before the best letter this time (that's Charlotte's, for the low-brained) gets the usual crate of Boddingtons. But we've got a new sponsor, so in the future the best letter each issue will get a crate of top drunk-juice Tiger Beer. All the rest still get fabuloid syringe pens.

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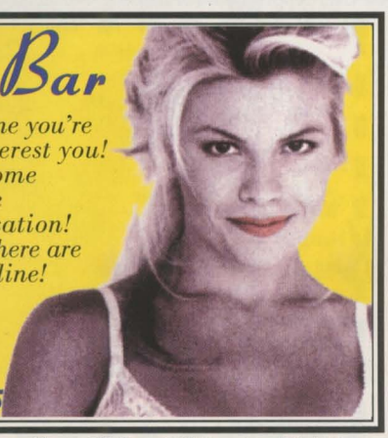

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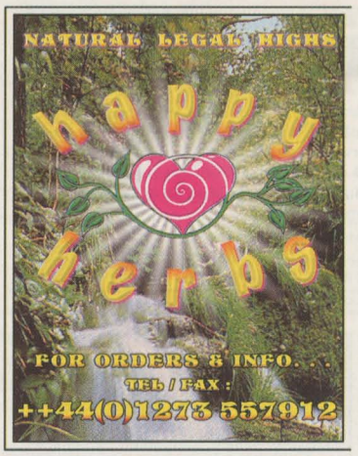

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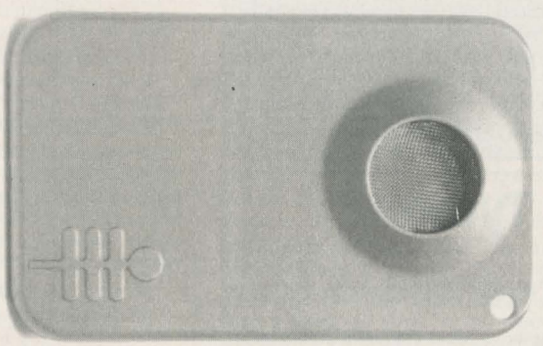

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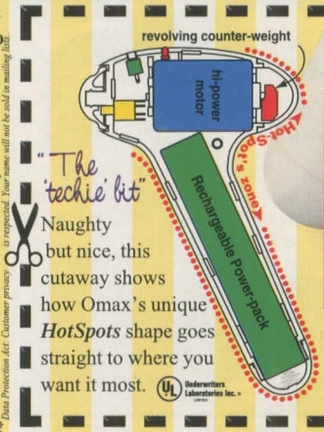

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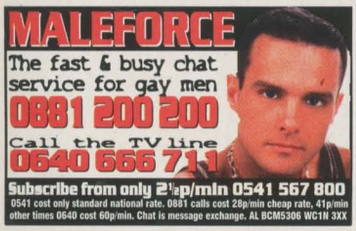
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* Liar of the Month: Angela Marshall

BACK IN APRIL, the Liar was amused to read newspaper reports about an artist who would paint your portrait and then shag you in the name of making a link between art and prostitution – it had that subtle ring of a good prank. A number of major papers, however, gathered at a studio in Bermondsey, London to see Angela Marshall's first session. According to curator Alex Chappel, the press had scared off the first six clients, but a seventh, Mark Childs, went through with a sitting and ended up writhing with Ms Marshall on a mattress, according to a'witness' who watched through the keyhole.

That'd be the Alex Chappel who in 1996 hoaxed the media with a company doing guided tours of mass-murder sites, possibly? And his partner David West – surely not the David West who was behind the prank about a soap-opera-addict centre two years ago? The Liar salutes you.

THE LIAR PRESENTS the Spice Girls as they've never been. This doctored image appears here as yet another example of the power of photo-editing software and a warning against believing everything you see, and not because the Liar is a bit of an old perv. Of course not.

INSTEAD OF running through a list of funny-but-bollocks urban legends, the Liar would instead like to shoot down one particular tale about a German guide-dog called 'Lucky'.

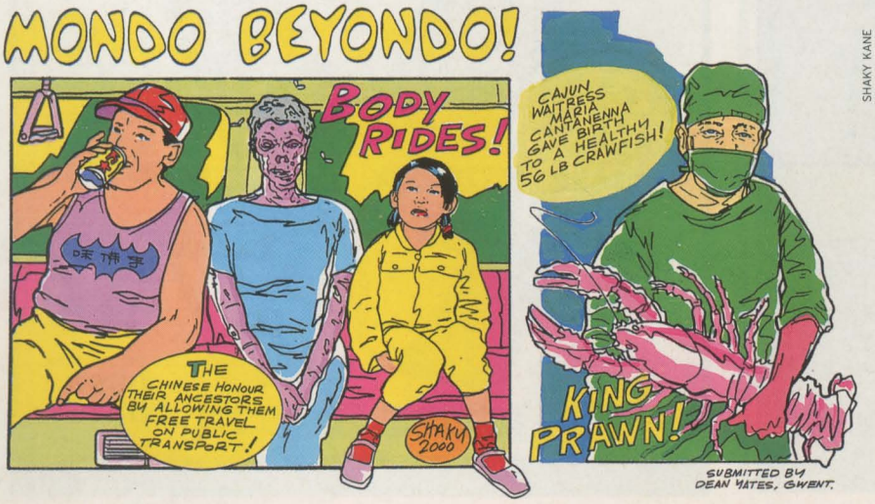
You may have heard this one: it's cropped up quite a lot. Lucky needs a new owner – his fifth – having "led his first owner in front of a bus, and the second off the end of a pier. He actually pushed his third owner off a railway platform just as the Cologne to Frankfurt express was approaching and he walked his fourth owner into heavy traffic, before abandoning him and running away to safety. But, apart from epileptic fits, he has a lovely temperament", to quote the original story, which appeared in the *Europa Times* in October 1993, and has appeared everywhere from the *Times* and the *New York Times* to *Private Eye*.

Suspecting that the story's a big fib, the Liar called Richard Lane at the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. Turns out he knows the story well.

"'Lucky' is the biggest urban myth in our circle," he said. "The only time a guide dog might have more than one owner is if it had just been trained and was given to an owner who then didn't need it; or if the dog and the owner don't get on. But it only happens if the dog is sufficiently young. And 99% of the time guide dogs only stay with one owner.

"As for Lucky being epileptic, that's absolutely ridiculous. A dog with any kind of health problem, mental or physical, would never be allowed into training, and occasionally dogs are withdrawn for behavioural reasons – like chasing cats or rabbits.

"There aren't international standards for these things, but I'm sure that the Germans' guide dog practices are very similar to British ones. So I'm afraid the story's rubbish." B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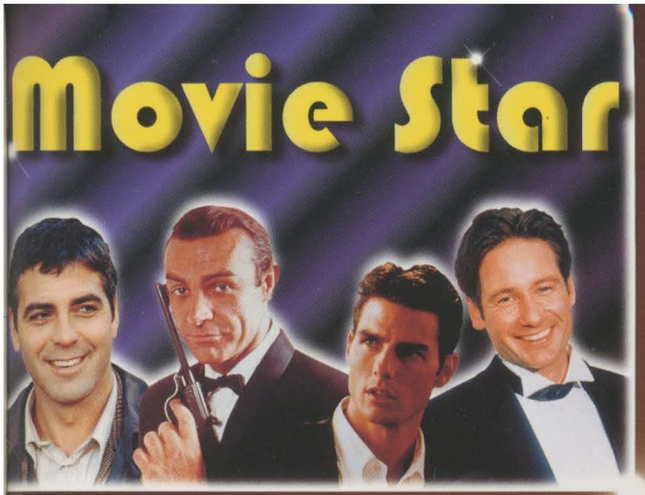

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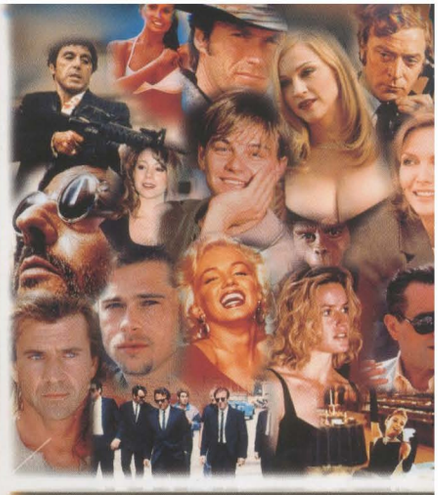

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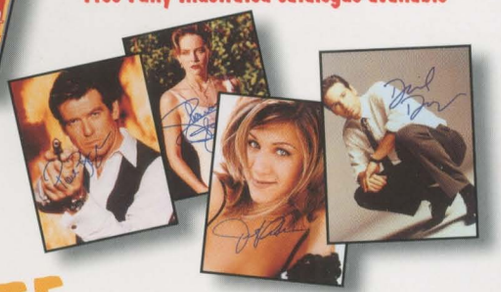

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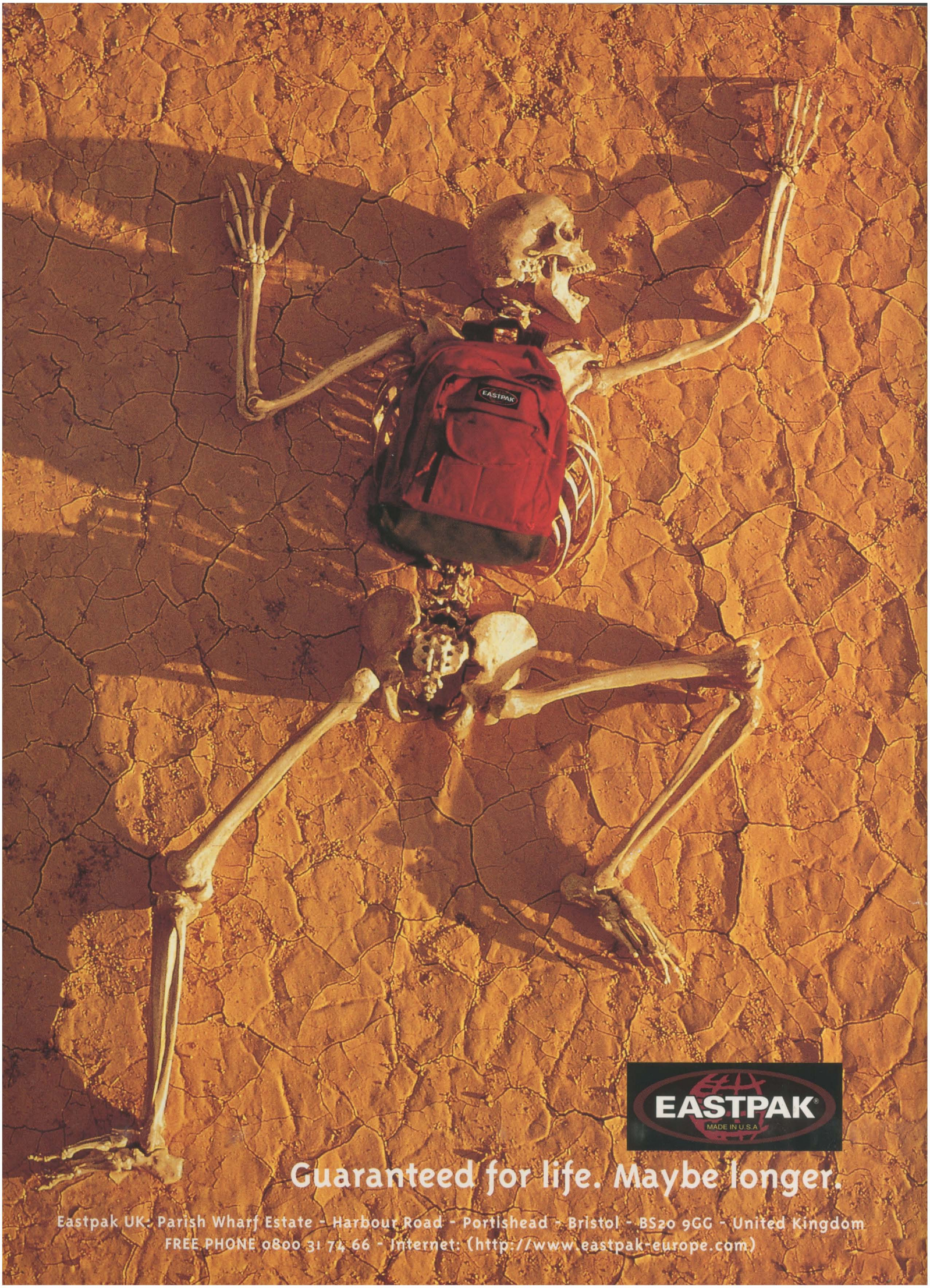
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